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John Mullin on a disturbing trend

Why farmers top the suicide league

Guardian 2 with European weather



Society

The hippies protecting our heritage

G2 pages 12/13

Is the 11-plus on the way back?

Principles be damned

G2 pages 8/9



'Lone Wolf' Chechens hold 2,000 hostages in hospital siege □ Yeltsin rules out talks to free captives

'Nobody gets out alive'



James Meek in Kizlyar and David Hearst in Moscow

PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin and his senior ministers, their authority in tatters, last night vowed to block any attempt to negotiate the release of over 2,000 hostages, including new-born babies, children and pregnant women, held by heavily armed Chechen separatists in a hospital in the small town of Kizlyar in Dagestan.

"This time, nobody will walk out of there alive," said the interior minister, General Anatoli Kulkov, referring to previous hostage-taking attacks by the Chechens. Troops encircling the town in the autonomous Russian republic would "exterminate the bandits", he said, adding that a grave was ready and waiting for the "Lone Wolf" Chechen group's leader, Salman Raduyev, aged 29.

Two hostages were reportedly killed by the Chechens during the taking of the hospital. Earlier a firefight with police yesterday morning left at least seven police and civilians dead.



Chechen separatists on Russian television yesterday after shooting their way into the hospital. Their leader said they were ready to fight to the death

he could order mortar fire on to the town, which is close to the Dagestan-Chechnya border. "We are ready to conduct active military operations with any unit of the Russian army for a week. It will go on without end until the war in Chechnya is over," he said.

The hospital is a three-storey building with a separate maternity wing. Kizlyar is a multi-ethnic community including several hundred Chechen families.

The nationalities minister, Vyacheslav Mikhailov, reinforced the government's tough line: "You don't talk to bandits. They are maniacs, a collective Chikotilo (an infamous serial killer)." Mr Kulkov said Russia would start attacking all the rebel bases in the Chechen mountains.

Slipping past thousands of Russian troops, the group of more than 100 rebels achieved complete surprise. At first they tried to seize a military airfield but were beaten back, after losing six of their men. Running battles

with Russian soldiers spread through the stunned town, as Chechens herded residents of nearby tower blocks into the hospitals. Two men who refused to go were shot dead. Once in the hospital Mr Raduyev, a son-in-law of Mr Dudayev, issued demands for the withdrawal of Russian troops, saying he would kill 15 hostages for every fighter of his who died.

TV exposure damages child speech

Sarah Boseley

Austin

TOO much television is stunting the language development of middle-class children as well as those from deprived inner-city areas, according to a leading speech therapist.

Dr Sally Ward, who is considered the country's leading authority on the speech development of young children, believes babies under one year old should not watch television or videos at all. Children of two or three should watch for no more than an hour a day.

Dr Ward's 10-year study of babies and toddlers in inner-city Manchester showed television was a very important factor in delaying the speech development of one in five children with problems. The background noise from television stopped them learning to talk as early as they should. At eight months, they neither recognised their names nor basic words like "juice" and "bricks". At three, they had the language of two-year-olds.

Now she has found that children from well-to-do families presenting with language problems at her London clinic are being handicapped in the same way. "The television is being used as a babysitter, with nannies particularly. Some of these middle-class children are spending far too much time watching television and videos."

Her findings are supported by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, whose spokeswoman, Liz Jepson, called Dr Ward "the leader in her field."



Speech, Language and Hearing Centre, that children whose language was below standard at the age of three could be set back for life. "They are likely to be educational failures and failures in all sorts of ways. They will go to school with depressed language levels and the whole educational progress is held back."

In her Manchester study, Dr Ward found that parents who were taught to turn off the television and talk to their children could quickly repair the damage. Babies of nine months would be back on course within four months. But the older they are before action is taken, the more difficult it is. "By eight, they are usually in special education and they are educational failures," she said.

"They get very fixated on the colours and flashing lights. They are riveted by the screen. We found in our study it was quite difficult to get them interested in toys."

"The only speech some children were hearing was a noise from the television they could neither understand nor respond to. Parents or minders had stopped talking to them. They were not being taught a basic vocabulary through one-to-one conversations with adults."

Lawyers sued for £1m

Birmingham 6 scientist claims errors by Carter-Ruck's

David Hencke Westminster Correspondent

FRANK Skuse, the former Home Office forensic scientist, is seeking £1 million damages from the eminent libel lawyers Peter Carter-Ruck and Partners over their handling of a libel case which arose from his role in the unsafe convictions of the Birmingham Six.

Dr Skuse brought the original action in 1989, more than three years after a Granada TV programme cast doubt on his tests to detect nitroglycerine, used to convict two of the Six. The programme said the substance could have come from handling playing cards. The convictions of the Six were found to be unsafe in 1991, and Dr Skuse's methods were later criticised in Judith Ward's successful appeal against her conviction for the M62 coach bombing.

His claim against Peter Carter-Ruck and Partners alleges negligence and breach of contract. Strongly contested by



Frank Skuse: ruined by cost of libel case

the firm, it is a counterclaim to a court application by Peter Carter-Ruck and Partners to obtain £131,625 outstanding on his bill.

Dr Skuse, through his lawyer, Denis Whalley of J. Keith Park in St. Helens, Merseyside, lists 20 grounds for his claim, including continuing to pursue the original claim when it was not reasonable to do so during a seven-year battle with Granada TV which left him facing a £286,478 legal bill.

Dr Skuse is now living on a small civil service pension after giving his libel lawyers

charges over his three homes and losing a lifetime's savings. To add to his misery his main home in Wigan has been burgled 14 times and fire-bombed. He faces bankruptcy.

Mr Whalley said: "We are talking of a claim amounting to at least £1 million. This includes returning the £156,652 which Dr Skuse has paid to the firm plus commercial rates of interest. We are also seeking damages for all the anxiety, losses and inconvenience caused by the action and for the loss of the prospect of recovering damages from Granada for his loss of reputation."

Peter Carter-Ruck and Partners denies that Dr Skuse is entitled to damages and says the full amount claimed in fees is properly payable. In particular, Dr Skuse has been unable to demonstrate with any certainty the method and efficacy of the tests he used in the Birmingham Six case, which meant that any libel judge would certainly have found that he should not have said at the trial that he was 99 per cent certain of his conclusions. Therefore, he could not have won his libel action. Dr Skuse eventually agreed to walk away from the case on the advice of a barrister.

Turn to page 2, column 7

Tory backer takes helm at BBC as Hussey goes early

Michael Ellison

A CONSERVATIVE businessman who claimed last night that he had no prospect of recovering damages from Granada for his loss of reputation.

Mr Hussey was looking on increasingly as playing out time after securing the BBC's new charter and licence agreement last year.

A former colleague of Sir Christopher's said yesterday: "It's bad news for anyone at the BBC who thought they were going to get a change of regime. He's talented, intelligent and has lots of ability but he can be unnecessarily rough with people."

14 months ago: "Greg's future is probably in media. Mine is not."

Last night the former Conservative Greater London Council member and ex-chairman of the Bow Group said: "What's changed is that I've been offered this rather good job, the best in broadcasting."

Sir Christopher, who takes over on a five-year contract at the end of March, will be paid £63,670 on top of the £200,000-a-year he receives as chairman of NFC. His consolation for losing the battle for LWT 21 months ago was £9 million in Granada shares.

"My Conservative connections are pretty ancient in the sense that I've not been active in politics for 24 years," he said last night, adding that he would allow his membership to lapse. "My job will be to defend the independence and impartiality of the BBC against all-comers and I'm quite clear about that."

regime of efficiency populated by outside producers, consultants and soothsayers has enraged many employees. Mr Birt was said to be delighted by the appointment.

Jack Cunningham, the shadow national heritage secretary, said: "It is absolutely essential that he is rigorous about his own and the corporation's political independence at all times."

Broadcasting industry insiders said that Sir Christopher, a former deputy chairman of the Independent Broadcasting Authority, was a professional with a public service background who would get on better with Mr Birt than did his predecessor.

WAKELY WAKEY!

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| ACCOUNT | INTEREST RATE | APPROVED OVERDRAFT |
| ABBAY NATIONAL | £0 | 9.9% |
| BARCLAYS | £5 | 19.2% |
| LLOYDS | £8 | 19.4% |
| MIDLAND | £7 | 16.0% |
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WAKE UP TO FRESHER BANKING

Sketch

The No Brains, No Trust show



Mark Lawson

THE day after the triumphant comeback to television of The Brains Trust...

some tension when Sir Michael Neubergh (C. Romford) raised the question of the sexual preferences of members of the British military...

However, although Nato has been responsible, among other things, for a famously explicit picture of two men holding hands in public...

With the Prime Minister sensitive about his numbers, it can not have been good for his nerves that so many of his colleagues had failed to make it back for the first day...

Paul Flynn (Lab, Newport West) asked what legitimacy the Major government had, always losing by-elections and now losing members...

Review

Neil's slick stuff on tangled web

Stuart Jeffries

The Andrew Neil Show BBC2

IT WAS billed as the BBC's first global talk show, with 49 million homes in 111 countries able to tune in on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays...

needed for his officers to be armed with CS gas and pepper sprays. It was a solid issue but perhaps not as topical as one would have expected...

Worse, after about 10 minutes of predominantly e-mail generated debate (raising the worrying possibility that contributions will be over-reliant on microserfs)...

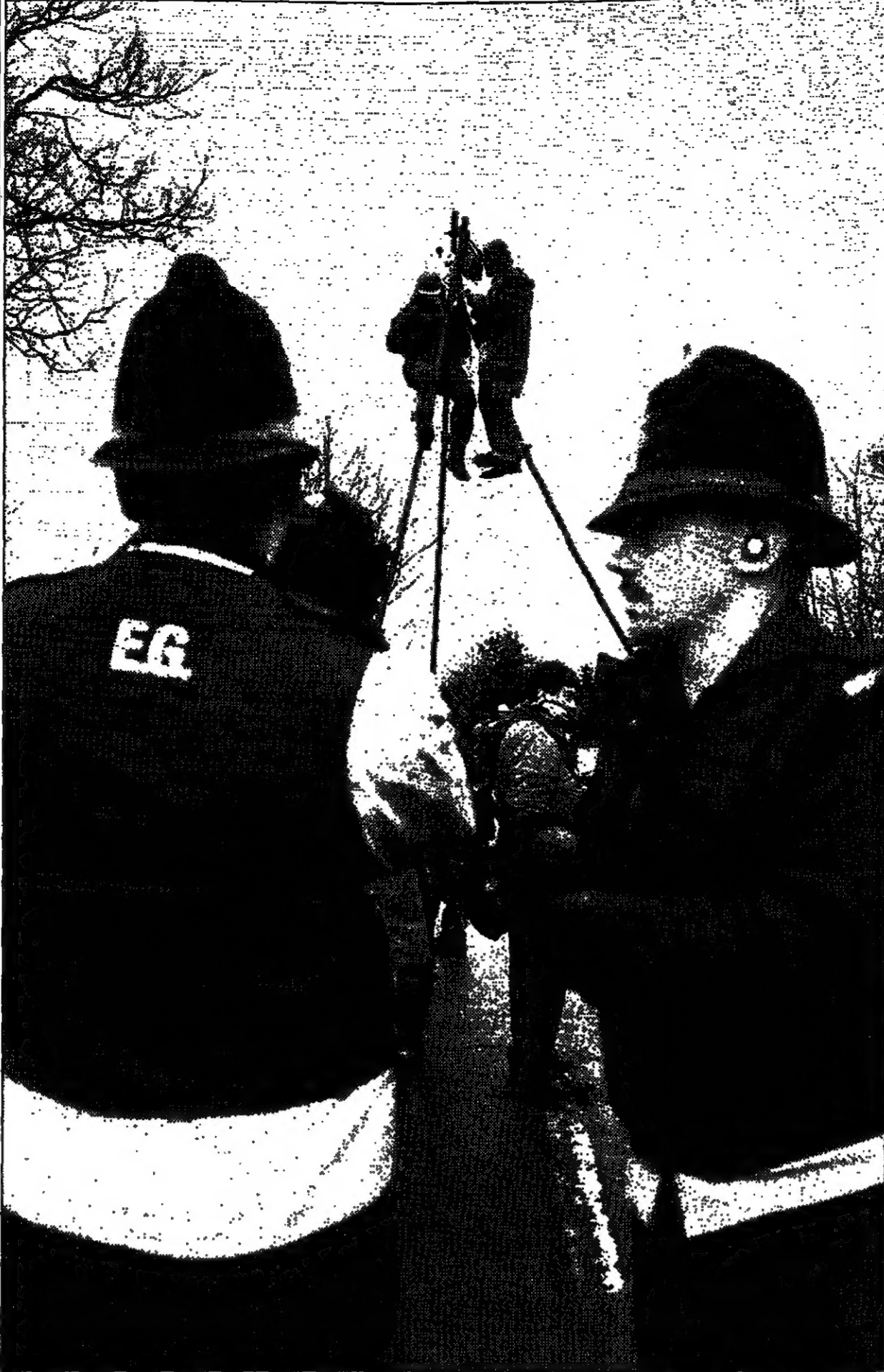
There may have been some cachet in luring Stewart on to the show, but he proved a dull and over-indulged guest. In response to largely patsy questions from Neil and viewers as far apart as Melbourne and Redditch...

Once the show proper started Neil proved a slick host, as slick as the stuff that was holding his notorious hair in place. He is nothing if not a capable television anchor-man...

Mourners pay last respects to schoolgirl killed in ice tragedy

ALMOST 500 people thronged the small Methodist chapel in Hemsworth, West Yorkshire, yesterday to say farewell to the "happy, always smiling" schoolgirl who died in a new year tragedy at the local park lake...

It is difficult to understand how such terrible things can happen, but there has been a remarkable surge of community feeling and goodwill following this tragedy...



One of the structures which penned 400 security guards in for so long that work was called off

Tripod tactic halts work on bypass

Alex Bellos on how protesters won the first round in the Battle of Newbury

THE so-called Third Battle of Newbury began in earnest yesterday when roads protesters halted the first day of construction of the town's controversial bypass...

Building work was unable to begin because 30 activists immobilised 400 security guards, brought in to protect the workers...

Yesterday's action was seen by most sections of the anti-roads movement as an unprecedented success. Peter Gaisford, a protester who lives in Newbury, said the psychological battle was being won...

It is understood that the construction company's first aim will be to build two compounds on the route of the nine-mile bypass, one at Speen and one at Tot Hill...

which is expected to take two-and-a-half years. Police made a special effort yesterday to appear even-handed, even offering protesters coffee before trying to remove them...

Thames Valley Police have joined the Hampshire force to oversee the building of the bypass. The extra policing would cost between £50,000 and £35,000 a week, Mr Blair said.

David Rendel, Liberal Democrat MP for Newbury — spent the morning at the demonstration arguing the case for the bypass. He said: "The residents of Newbury by a huge majority support the bypass. It's between six to one to eight to one in favour."

Poll backs cap on lottery

Martin Linton

MOST people believe that individual National Lottery prizes should be limited to £1 million, with a £10 million cap on the total jackpot...

This ambivalent attitude emerges in an ICM poll for the Guardian taken at the end of the week when the roll-over prize reached a record £42 million and nine out of 10 adults were said to have bought tickets.

The poll casts doubt on the argument by ministers and lottery organisers Camelot that the public must be happy with the roll-over system because they buy more tickets.

According to the survey 63 per cent want a £1 million limit on individual prizes, 70 per cent want a £10 million limit on the jackpot, 75 per cent want the lottery to be non-profit-making and 67 per cent believe it should give more money to charity...

The idea that the lottery should be non-profit-making again appeals to every group, though more to Labour voters than Conservatives (81 to 60) and more to pensioners than young voters (77 to 73).

The idea that more should be given to charity has universal appeal, most of all among women (91 per cent) and young voters (94 per cent). Eighty-four per cent of Conservatives back it.

Government ministers have dismissed calls for limits on prizes or jackpots and on Camelot's profits. Camelot's media relations manager, Lisa Bond, said yesterday: "We have no plans to limit the jackpot because we don't believe that's what players want..."

ICM interviewed a random sample of 1,200 adults aged 18-plus by telephone between January 6 and 7, 1996. Interviews were conducted throughout the country and the results weighted to the profile of all adults.

Francis Wheen, G2, page 11

Clinton wants to hit critic on the nose

Jonathan Freedland in Washington

BILL Clinton wants to punch the nose of a leading columnist who called his wife Hillary "a congenital liar", aides revealed yesterday.

Replying to New York Times pundit William Safire's latest column — which blasted the First Lady for allegedly concealing her role in the Whitewater affair — the White House press secretary, Mike McCurry, said: "The president, if he were not the president, would have delivered a more forceful response to that on the bridge of Mr Safire's nose."

News of Mr Clinton's pugilistic temptation came amid a series of political blows to the president, including a judicial ruling which could force him to answer sexual harassment charges in court and an opinion poll which showed Mr Clinton lagging behind the Republican presidential favourite, Bob Dole, for the first time.

The CNN/USA Today poll found Mr Dole would beat Mr Clinton in November's election by a 49 to 46 per cent margin. In November Mr Clinton led by 16 points.

The resuscitation of the Whitewater affair is partly to blame for the decline in the president's standing. Newly released documents suggest the First Lady has failed to tell the truth in several key areas, and may even have lied under oath. According to Mr Safire, "she is compelled to mislead and to ensure her subordinates and friends in a web of deceit."

The columnist's attack — reprinted in the Guardian yesterday — shocked Washington by aiming its vitriol at a president's wife — a target once considered off-limits. Mr Safire is the high priest of conservative commentary and his column is compulsory reading in the capital.

Mr McCurry said the writer was not under immediate threat of Mr Clinton's fist. "The president, being president, knows that he can't possibly do such a thing." The last similar threat came from Harry Truman, who promised to hit a reporter for criticising his daughter's stings.

Nevertheless, Mr McCurry's remarks suggest shrewd thinking by the White House. By leaping to defend the honour of his wife, Mr Clinton wins over traditional voters and those who regard attacks on the First Lady as taboo. Republicans have long been aware that hitting the president through his wife is a high-risk strategy.

But they believe cracks in Mrs Clinton's story are wide open and should be exploited. Under oath she has sworn she did only limited work for the Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan — the financial institution at the centre of the Whitewater affair.

Yet billing records — mysteriously discovered in the private White House residence last week — show she worked an hour a week for 15 months on the account.

Earlier a memo from a senior aide surfaced stating clearly that Mrs Clinton ordered the shambling 1993 purge of the White House travel staff — a direct rebuttal of the First Lady's claims that she had no role in the affair.

Meanwhile, a federal appeals court ruled that a sexual harassment complaint against Mr Clinton by former Arkansas state employee Paula Jones could go to trial.

Birmingham 6 scientist sues libel lawyers for £1 million

Continued from page 1

Geoffrey Shaw, that he had never seen "such a stone cold loser of a libel action."

Letters reveal the involvement of the financier Sir James Goldsmith in bankrolling the action from January 1987 to October 3, 1988 on condition that Peter Carter-Ruck handled it.

Sir James told the Guardian: "I dropped the case because it was far more of a political than a civil matter."

His legal trust is said to be intended to help people in civil rather than political disputes.

Originally, Sir James was advised that Dr Skuse had a 65 per cent chance of success, but this was being reviewed in the light of further information provided by Dr Skuse as the action progressed.

Later, Desmond Browne and George Carman advised that he was likely to lose. During this period Peter Carter-Ruck and Partners spent a considerable amount of time researching and obtaining information. Dr Skuse says that the firm caused a substantial delay in the case. This is denied by the firm, which says that if there was any delay it was caused or condoned by Dr Skuse.

The costs of the case rose from an initial estimate of £50,000 to £100,000, according to Dr Skuse, to an eventual bill of £388,478, which Peter Carter-Ruck reduced by £100,000. Peter Carter-Ruck claims that Dr Skuse was kept fully informed about the merits of his case and its cost, which was fair and reasonable for the firm's work over five years.

Today, more than 21 years after the outrage which killed 21 people and injured 163, Dr Skuse is still adamant that he is test for traces of commercial explosives has never been accurately replicated.

Advertisement for 'The UN Blue Book Series' by HMSO, listing various titles and contact information.

Handwritten text in Arabic script at the bottom of the page.



Jian Xun was admitted to Shanghai orphanage on July 7, 1992. Ten days later he was dead

Rifkind in China: Talks make progress but new questions emerge over 46,000 children not accounted for by officials

Andrew Higgins in Beijing reports on the Foreign Secretary's visit and John Gittings in London (right) looks at claims of 'dying rooms'

Mystery of the 'missing' orphans

CHINA yesterday told the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, that a documentary about Chinese orphanage "dying rooms" shown on British television last night has caused a "serious disturbance" in relations and amounted to a "biased and vicious" attack on China.

But striking an apparently conciliatory note on the first day of Mr Rifkind's visit, Chinese officials added that the affair should not be allowed to upset efforts to achieve a diplomatic and military rapprochement between the two countries.

The decision to screen the Channel 4 documentary "In total opposition from the Chinese side", said foreign ministry spokesman Chen Jian, "undoubtedly a serious disturbance in Sino-British relations which are being improved and developed".

China and Britain, however, denied the row had caused any serious damage and pointed to progress yesterday on the issue of right of abode in Hong Kong after 1997, a new container port for the colony, and on other issues that have long exercised diplomats. The two sides also agreed to boost military and political exchanges.

Before flying to Beijing after a visit to Hong Kong, Mr Rifkind gave the clearest admission yet of Britain's increasing impotence in Hong Kong less than 18 months before the handover. He said London had no real means to safeguard the territory's future beyond a hope that China's leaders "do not want to shoot themselves in the foot".

China's anger at Channel 4, and at expressions of concern about human rights by Mr Rifkind, appeared by yesterday to involve more ritual than passion. China's London embassy had earlier written to Channel 4 demanding the documentary be cancelled.

"The Chinese government defended their position in very robust terms," said Mr Rifkind last night, "but at no time was it suggested the subject matter or programme would have any implications for relations between British and Chinese government."

Mr Rifkind was said to have asked about conditions in orphanages and was given assurances by China's foreign minister and vice-premier, Qian Qichen, that "no abuses were taking place". Queries about human rights received much the same answer.

Mr Qian rejected British complaints that a 14-year jail sentence handed down last month against Wei Jingsheng was "very, very harsh considering the very minor offences". He repeated Beijing's assertion that Mr Wei, who has spent most of the past 16 years in jail, had plotted to overthrow the government.

Nor did China budge in its determination to scrap Hong Kong's Legislative Council after 1997, a body elected under reforms introduced by Governor Chris Patten and considered illegitimate by Beijing. "Our stand has not changed and cannot change," said the foreign ministry spokesman.

But Mr Rifkind did secure what he said was a promise by China to allow all those currently registered as permanent Hong Kong residents to stay in the territory as long as they wanted after 1997. Non-Chinese residents worry they might lose their right of residence. Britain must decide whether to grant visa-free entry for holders of Hong Kong Special Administration Region Passports after 1997.

China indicated yesterday that plans to sell two nuclear reactors have been shelved, but the two countries were exploring future co-operation on nuclear energy. Washington had urged China to scrap the deal, fearing Tehran would use the reactors to develop nuclear arms.

Party officials deny they are motivated by racism. Ms Frankland said inquiries showed Mr Neil was not, as indicated on his CV, a current member of the Bow Group, Foreign Affairs Forum, Centre for Policy Studies and Institute of Directors. Under education, he had written "Doctor of Business Administration, Manchester Business School".



Han Weichang: denies policy of allowing orphans to die

Case for
Constitution protects children's welfare, prohibits abuse.

No "killing rooms". Death statistics exaggerated.

Zhang Shuyun seeking publicity to get US visa.

100 city orphanages and 40,000 "welfare institutions" in countryside.

Conditions "may not be good", but China is a developing country.

Case against
Conditions in China's orphanages worse than anywhere else; little chance of surviving to adulthood.

In Shanghai Children's Welfare Institute, mortality few years ago was "probably 90 per cent".

Officials turn blind eye to "fatal neglect". Reduces population, saves costs.

Foreign adoption of orphans often means officials grow rich and neglect other children.

THE mystery of China's "missing orphans" is looming over accusations that children in institutions have been routinely left to die. In a "fact sheet" issued by its embassy in London, China yesterday insisted that "the so-called dying rooms simply do not exist anywhere in China."

It also claims that all children in need are well provided for with more than 48,000 institutions in the countryside as well as 100 urban orphanages, to look after orphanage nationwide. But the report titled Death by Default, published by the US organisation Human Rights Watch Asia (HRWA), not only suggests that large numbers of orphans die in institutions, it also highlights the much larger number who are unaccounted for at all.

Last year the People's Daily newspaper gave the orphan population as roughly 100,000 — a figure thought unusually low for a country with a population of 1.2 billion. Using official statistics, HRWA has located just over 17,000 of this figure in urban orphanages and fewer than 37,000 in the rural institutions cited by the Chinese embassy. This leaves a shortfall of 46,000.

Individual foster care has been discouraged since legal changes allowing adoption only in "genuine" cases — that is, where the child has lost both parents by death. But most orphans are abandoned by their parents, either because they are female and/or disabled, or because they are "unplanned" and the parents will be heavily fined for exceeding the quota of one child per family.

Attention has focused so far on the detailed account in the HRWA report of one institution — the Shanghai Children's Welfare Institute where the worst abuse is said to have occurred. In an official tour on Tuesday, foreign journalists interviewed the home's former

head, Han Weichang, who has been accused of orchestrating a policy of allowing orphans to die by neglect, and of abusing some children and raping a young girl.

Mr Han denied the charges, tearfully blaming his ex-colleague Zhang Shuyun, who smuggled out documentation on which the report is based. Ms Zhang was also interviewed in the Channel 4 programme Return to the Dying Rooms, broadcast last night, which enraged Beijing when an earlier version was shown last summer.

Mr Han admitted that the orphanage had been investigated three times but insisted Ms Zhang was motivated by thwarted ambition and that he had been cleared. The Shanghai home has

been cleaned up since the deaths occurred. But the evidence of malpractice and a subsequent cover-up by local authorities is convincing. It will not surprise those familiar with Chinese bureaucracy, where incompetent or corrupt managers are protected by well-placed friends.

HRWA's broader claim is more contentious. It is that most orphanages are "death camps" and that the "extraordinarily high death rates" are seen officially as "desirable". This claim for an all-China pattern of "death by default" is based on research by experienced investigators, but remains hard to prove.

Some Western experts on Chinese family and child policy confirm that death rates in orphanages are high, and that standards of medical care are low. But they say these problems are typical where schools and hospitals are chronically underfunded.

Negative attitudes towards disability may also play a part. "China is not the only country," says one specialist, "where dying rooms exist."

The HRWA report has detailed information for 87 "child welfare" orphanages located in urban China. These contain only about 40 per cent of children institutionalised in towns and cities. The majority are in other homes for which no data is available.

HRWA's claim for the high number of deaths nationwide is based on 1989 statistics — the only year when such figures were published. The figures are incomplete

but HRWA concludes that the truest picture of annual mortality is an average of 24 per cent throughout the child welfare sector.

No amount of arguing over the figures can excuse the scenes of innocent suffering witnessed in Shanghai — and elsewhere. The HRWA report includes an account of an orphanage in Harbin in north-east China visited last year by an experienced Der Spiegel correspondent. He describes "a dim room as big as a dance hall" in which babies and children lie unattended.

"Kicking and thrashing, they doze in their own urine, some naked, some dressed in a dirty little jacket... together with 30 mostly mongoloid women, shut off from the outside world."

An orphan looks on curiously as a foreign television cameraman visits the Shanghai Children's Welfare Institute

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APOLOGY.

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4 BRITAIN

A fish called zander swims its way on to dinner table

Gary Younge on a succulent dish



Heading for the dinner table... Steve Griffiths, a British Waterways fisheries manager, gets a close-up view of the zander. PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN AROLES

WINDING its way up England's canals toward the Trent is a little known game fish that could well end its journey on the dinner table. It is a fish called a zander — already a delicacy on the Continent, where they eat 10,000 tons of it a year, and British Waterways is hoping it could replace cod in fish and chip shops.

great flavour as well as being firm, fleshy and delicate... and it's easy to cook," he said. The fish has already become *de rigueur* in many of Britain's French restaurants. And even though the world-famous Harry Ramsden's fish and chip shop chain had not heard of the zander until Monday, it has asked British Waterways to send a sample.

Simon Newnes, a wholesale fish merchant at Billingsgate market in London, said it was British scepticism about freshwater fish, as well as the price — £2-£4 a pound, that

explained why zander has yet to catch on. It is extremely popular in France, the Netherlands, and eastern Europe, he said. The zander was smuggled in from eastern Europe by the Duke of Bedford in 1876, and released into the lakes of Woburn, Bedfordshire. It was introduced to Fenland waters in the 1960s, and since then has spread to the north. Fenland has not been welcomed by anglers, who blame its predatory instincts for depleted fish stocks.

environment, says Steve Griffiths, a fisheries manager for British Waterways. "With bigger animals like the otter now scarce, the zander's natural predator is man. So the more they are caught and eaten, the greater the redressing effect on the underwater environment will be." And this is why British Waterways is publicising the fish as a food. "At the moment we are having to cull them, but it seems a much better idea to encourage people to eat them — they could even catch the fish themselves," said a spokeswoman.

Fish facts
Can grow to 60cm or more
Pike-like head and jaws
The zander (*Stizostedion lucioperca*) is a member of the perch family from Eastern Europe, introduced to the Woburn Abbey lakes in 1876.
The fish is powerful and the zander lives on a wide range of smaller fish. A female can lay up to 2 million eggs from April to June.



Chains stay for prison mothers

Alan Travis Home Affairs Editor

THE Home Office Minister, Ann Widdecombe, last night rejected an offer by the medical authorities which would end the practice of keeping pregnant women prisoners in chains to prevent their escape.

Miss Widdecombe defended the use of manacles on pregnant prisoners during hospital visits but insisted they were removed "once labour was confirmed" and said medical staff had to fill in an official form recording the moment.

The Royal College of Midwives is now to meet the director general of the Prison Service, Richard Tilt, in a further effort to resolve the situation. The minister's defence in the Commons yesterday only served to provoke even fiercer protests from Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs who complained about the continuing use of a "barbaric 19th century practice" which violated the dignity of the prisoners involved. Several women Labour MPs graphically told Miss Widdecombe that she had failed to understand what happened during childbirth. Diane Abbott told her: "You are not going to run anywhere if you are about to go into labour." During the exchanges it be-

came clear that Whittington hospital in north London had offered to end the need for women to be chained when they visited the hospital from nearby Holloway prison, the main women's jail in Britain.

The shadow home secretary, Jack Straw, said the chairman of the Whittington hospital trust, Baroness Hayman, had expressed concerns about the practice of manac-

ling pregnant prisoners. The hospital has offered to send midwives into Holloway to provide maternity services up to the point at which the women went into labour when they would be transferred to the nearby hospital.

Mr Straw demanded: "Why has the Prison Service been so dilatory in responding to the offer made by the Whittington that they will take their community midwifery service into Holloway itself, thus ending the need for pregnant prisoners to travel to hospital except when their labour has been established?" But Miss Widdecombe rejected the offer: "I do not think it would be anything but harsh to have women deliver in prison, a situation which could well be the result of midwives going into prison rather than prisoners going into hospital."

Twenty women prisoners had escaped during hospital visits since 1990, including a pregnant inmate who had jumped from a first floor window.

Mas'ari shadow over BBC Arabic service

Seumas Milne

THE future of the BBC's Arabic language television service has been thrown into doubt by confirmation that its coverage of the threatened deportation of Saudi dissident Mohammed al-Mas'ari has been repeatedly censored by the service's Saudi-owned satellite relay station in Rome.

was taking the matter very seriously. A BBC source said jobs were at stake. A spokesman said the corporation was investigating the interruptions and stood by its insistence, when the service was launched 18 months ago, that "any interference with what the viewer sees of our programmes would be completely unacceptable."

The BBC's involvement in the Mas'ari affair deepened as it emerged that the Saudi dissident's appeal against deportation to the Caribbean island of Dominica and application for judicial review are likely to take several months, during which he will be allowed to stay in Britain.

There was a call in Parliament last night for the sacking of the chief executives of the arms firms Vickers and British Aerospace, Sir Colin Chandler and Dick Evans, over their "casual discussion of the difficulties involved in either kidnapping or murder-

ing" Mr Mas'ari in the Vickers memorandum published in the Guardian on Saturday. A Commons motion in the name of George Galloway, the Scottish Labour MP and champion of the Saudi opposition, called the two men "accessories before the fact of a conspiracy to kidnap or murder a defenceless refugee."

Rosie Douglas, leader of the opposition Labour Party in Dominica, predicted after meeting Mr Mas'ari in London yesterday that the agreement by his prime minister, Edison James, to give the Saudi dissident asylum would be reversed in the island parliament or by popular pressure on the streets.

Mr Douglas said: "Dominica cannot become the dumping ground for dissidents". The police could not protect the refugee, and Mr James faced resistance in his cabinet to what had been a personal deal with Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkin.

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David Hencke reports on a continuing legal fight over forensic evidence that sent the Birmingham Six to prison

Bomb tests backfired on scientist

Lawyers accused after libel battle

ELEVEN years ago Frank Skuse, Home Office forensic scientist, was at the peak of his career. He and his wife had three homes and a small nest egg of investments worth around £300,000.

He had a national reputation for fighting terrorists, keeping drink drivers off the road, and was planning to set up a scientific consultancy abroad to tackle international terrorism. He had even been recommended for an honour.

Dr Skuse was hoping for promotion after a 20-year career in the forensic service. He had been involved in the development of the breathalyser and the investigation of two Welsh arson campaigns.

While working at the Chorley Forensic Science Laboratory in Lancashire, he became famous for devising the tests to trace explosives which were used after the Birmingham pub bombings in 1974 and the bombing of the army coach on the M62 the same year, of which Judith Ward was cleared in 1992.

But his techniques were discredited — first through Granada Television's *World in Action* programme, and when another forensic scientist produced a "replica" of his test in Ms Ward's successful appeal in 1992.

He had lost his job seven years previously, though the techniques used in the Birmingham bombing case were upheld by Lord Lane, then Lord Chief Justice, in the first unsuccessful appeal in 1987.

He decided to sue Granada TV for libel and became involved in a nine-year battle which ended with each side "walking away" from the trial in October 1994. This meant he had to pay his own legal costs.

Dr Skuse is suing his lawyers, Peter Carter-Ruck and partners for alleged negligence and breach of contract in their handling of the libel

case. Today he is a ruined man, but still maintains that his methods — developed from a German scientist's test for nitroglycerine, the Griess test — were accurate.

The costs of the libel action came to almost £300,000. His former libel lawyers, Peter Carter-Ruck, have charges on his three homes, and are pressing to sell them to raise the rest of their fees. They include his villa in Sardinia, and a detached home in Blackpool. He now mainly lives in a two bedroom semi in Wigan worth around £220,000.

Even his timeshare in Tenerife and caravan are at risk as he faces bankruptcy over the legal bill. His home in Wigan has suffered 14 burglaries and has been fire-bombed. He is convinced that he is an IRA target.

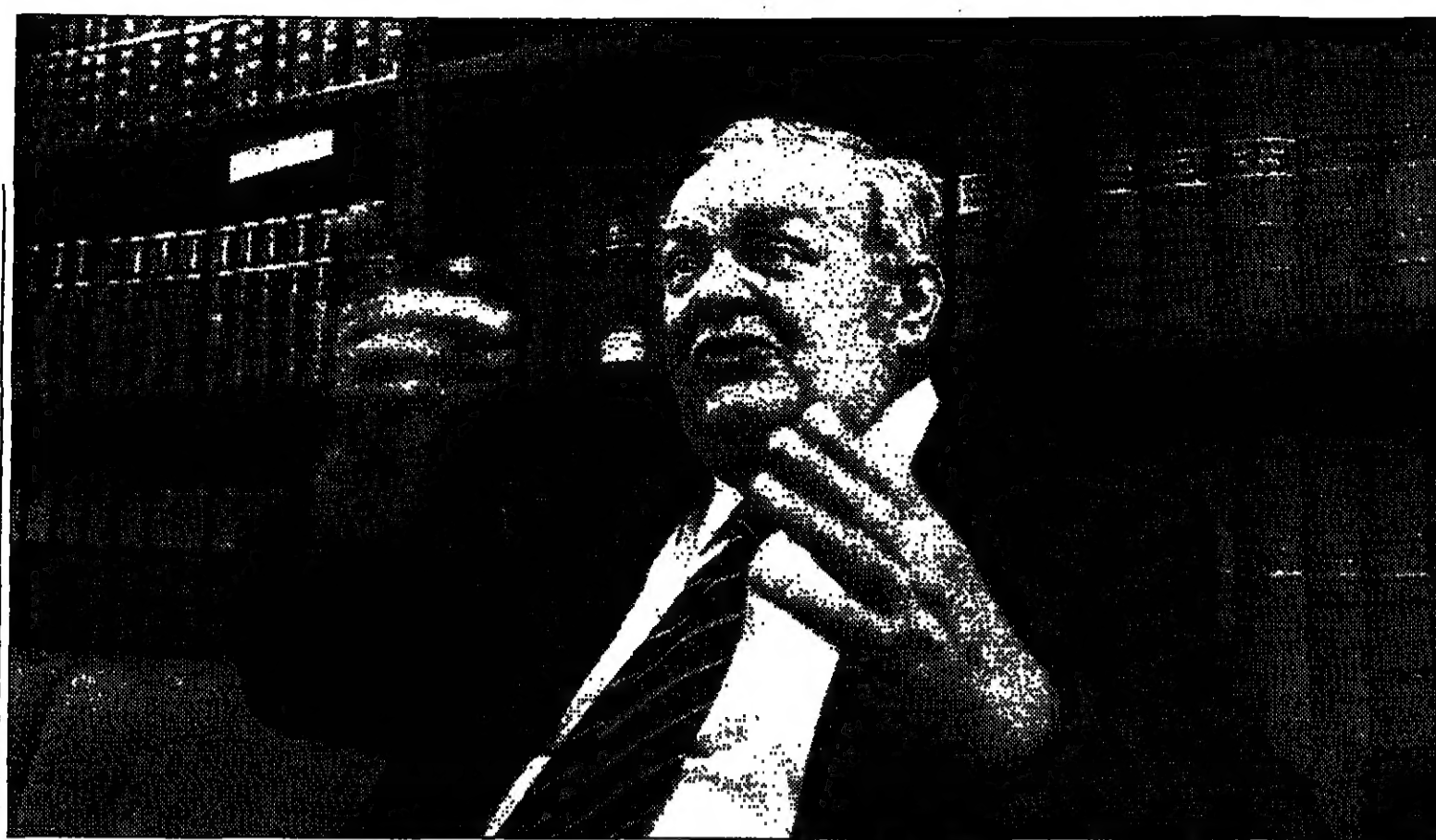
Peter Carter-Ruck and partners claim Dr Skuse was kept informed of the fees throughout the action and from the outset the risk inherent in libel actions.

Dr Skuse launched his libel claim through a firm of local solicitors. World in Action had tried to contact him but he was advised by Margaret Pereira, a senior Home Office official, not to be involved in "trial by media".

Dr Skuse obtained a legal opinion in 1988 from David Eady QC which said that the libel until after the Court of Appeal had considered the Birmingham Six case.

After the appeal was rejected, Dr Skuse received confirmation that Sir James was funding his case. A writ was served on March 29, 1988, alleging that the programme said he had "misrepresented to the court [at the 1975 Birmingham bombers trial] negligently the effect of the scientific tests which he had carried out." Mr Eady concluded Dr Skuse had a good prospect of success.

Then on October 3, 1989 Sir James pulled out. It came just after Dr Skuse had been asked by Peter Carter-Ruck



The discredited Frank Skuse, who was advised by Detective Superintendent George Reade (top right) to seek help from Sir James Goldsmith (right)

and partners to put up £5,000 alongside a £10,000 contribution from Sir James as security for Granada's costs of the action if they won.

His withdrawal came against a background of a legal challenge from Goodman Derrick and Co, Granada TV's solicitors, to the funding of the case by Sir James Goldsmith.

At this point Peter Carter-Ruck and partners told him that the costs could escalate to £280,000. Dr Skuse says he believed this sum would cover his and Granada's costs if he lost.

There then followed a series of delays, increasing costs and gloomy barristers' opinions, ending in a disagreement between Dr Skuse and his legal advisers as to the value of some of the evidence. Just before the trial Dr

Skuse wanted a key document which explained his test method which he thought crucial to the argument of his competence explained to the court.

Geoffrey Shaw thought that this would do more harm than good and left it out of his opening remarks but agreed to mention it later if his client insisted.

By the end of 1993, having paid more than £50,000 to Peter Carter-Ruck, Dr Skuse was becoming concerned at the costs.

In letters on January 18 and 27, 1994, Peter Carter-Ruck and partners said that the future costs of the action would probably be between £170,000 and £200,000 and, "bearing in mind the extraordinary eventualities", his assets were likely to be more than sufficient.

In May, action was taken to secure charges on his homes.

In June George Carman was called in. Dr Skuse and his wife agreed to sell shares worth £26,000 to pay for his fees (later reduced to £20,000). At that stage Mr Carman gave him a 30 to 30 per cent chance of success. Dr Skuse said he still wanted to proceed.

On July 29, Nigel Tait, of Peter Carter-Ruck, wrote to confirm Dr Skuse's decision to proceed: "a decision I entirely support". He warned him however of the consequences of doing so, saying that the sale of his properties and his shares would cover the first four weeks of a trial.

He adds: "I am aware that you have other assets, for example your caravan, your car and your time shares. Could you please provide me with a list of what you con-

sider these to be worth. If you are not successful, these too will have to be sold."

But on August 17 when Dr Skuse and his wife met his solicitors, the lawyers suggested that they walked away from the case — leaving Dr Skuse with no damages but avoiding Granada's costs. He says he was unhappy at the decision.

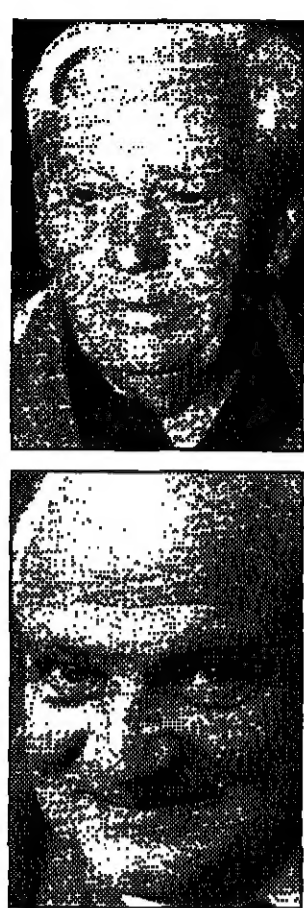
They were told that Peter Carter-Ruck was a good friend of Lord Goodman, the founder of the firm of solicitors instructed by Granada Television, and this friendship might afford a useful channel by which negotiations might be opened.

They were told he had little chance of success. This was confirmed later by Geoffrey Shaw who had been asked to advise. On September 14 Peter Carter-Ruck and part-

ners strongly advised Dr Skuse to accept a "walk away" settlement with a warning that he would lose his Sardinian property if he pulled out and his other two homes if he continued. He was also given an estimate of costs of £187,400 on September 16.

On 27 September, a week before the trial, he was advised by Geoffrey Shaw that "he had not a cat's chance in hell" of winning.

His lawyers were despairing of him. On October 14 — when the trial subsided into a settlement — he received a letter saying [Geoffrey Shaw] "is of the view that, were all the time in the world available to him, he could not prepare your case in such a way as to give you anything more than a minute chance of success."



MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: DENIS THORPE

Nurseries to get voucher grace

Donald MacLeod
Education Correspondent

PPRIVATE nurseries and childminders' groups will be able to cash in parents' vouchers for a year before being inspected, Robin Squire, the Education Minister, conceded yesterday.

The first £1,100 vouchers are due to go out to parents of four-year-olds in two pilot areas in the next fortnight, with a national scheme covering every four-year-old following in September, 1997.

Twelve thousand voluntary playgroups and private nurseries in England are expected to register and the Office for Standards in Education faces a huge task recruiting 4,000 early-years specialists to carry out the inspections which ministers have promised in the first full year of operation. Ofsted is struggling to inspect all primary schools over a four-year cycle.

Graham Lane, education chairman of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, which sees the vouchers scheme as a threat to its own nursery services, said ministers were being "sophisticated". "Fears will remain that new operators can be responsible for the care and education of three and four-year-olds for at least a year without any form of external inspection."

Mr Squire said nurseries would initially be able to receive voucher money on the basis of a detailed self-assessment of their staffing and provision. "This is not just child

care, this is serious educational provision. But there is a trade-off between the necessity of having large numbers of providers and the importance and timing of inspection," he said. The number of nursery places expected to increase although there was no guarantee that every child would find a place on day one.

Individual childminders would not normally qualify but they could join with others to form a playgroup register, according to the Next Steps document issued by the department yesterday.

David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, said Mr Squire had admitted that parents would have to take part in a quality check before being seen how Ofsted will accommodate the additional workload when they are already struggling to meet their target for school inspections.

All nurseries and pre-schools will be expected to prepare children for school in six areas outlined by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority as "desirable outcomes". The guidelines have been altered to include more emphasis on play and on early years teachers that they would be used by untrained helpers to drill children.

Nick Tate, the authority's chief executive, said: "The outcomes are things children should be attaining at. Progress towards them will vary and they can be achieved in a variety of different ways."

Goals for children aged four

FOUR-YEAR-OLDS will be expected to work towards these goals as they prepare to start school. Some children will progress on to Key Stage 1 of the national curriculum but others may not achieve all the desirable outcomes.

Personal/social development: Children are confident, able to establish relationships with other children and adults, work in groups and independently, treat living things, property and their environment with care.

Language and literacy: Listen and talk about experiences; use growing vocabulary; make up stories; enjoy books and handle them carefully; know that in English print is read from left to right and top to bottom;

recognise the alphabet by shape and sound; write their names in upper and lower case letters.

Mathematics: Use mathematical language such as circle, bigger than and in front of; recognise and recreate patterns; familiar with number songs, counting games; match and count everyday objects; use numbers to 10; begin to show awareness of adding and subtracting.

Creative: Explore sound and colour, texture, shape, form and space in two and three dimensions.

Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning, by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority. For copies call 0345 543345

Multi-millionaire succeeds Hussey at BBC

Former LWT chairman will run corporation for next five years

Maggie Brown

FEVER since the BBC won its new charter and licence agreement from the Government last year there has been a sense that Marmaduke Hussey's day as chairman of the BBC was over. His authority finished.

He no longer had any real hold over his steely former favourites, John Birt, the BBC director general, and Sir Christopher Hussey, the chairman of the BBC's parent company, British Broadcasting Corporation, who was due to step down, after an unprecedented 10 years, by next autumn. Yesterday the Government announced his successor, the former director general, Sir Christopher Bland, ensuring that, whenever the General Election comes, it is its appointee

who goes forward for at least the next five years.

The Labour Party is quietly annoyed about the secretive selection of a multi-millionaire businessman who made a fortune through pickering a "golden handout" share option when LWT was taken over by Granada two years ago. But no rules have been broken: rightly or wrongly, new chairmen emerge from the ether. The BBC's new draft charter gives the chairman more power but makes no provision to change the method of appointment for this most coveted and powerful of positions.

There are also sound strategic reasons for picking a new chairman. Sir Christopher Hussey is also a close acquaintance of Mr Birt, who has in recent months



Marmaduke Hussey, leaves a huge legacy



Sir Christopher Bland: experienced manager

been raising spirits at the BBC by apparently considering a new career. Perhaps he will now stay on. The director general has holidayed at Sir Christopher's Dordogne chateau and weekendend at his Hampshire country house.

Mr Birt was LWT director of programmes before becoming BBC deputy director general in 1987, and had been earmarked by Sir Christopher,

then chairman of LWT, to become managing director.

Now the two former colleagues are lined up together again, and in highly favourable circumstances. The new charter firmly sets the BBC two objectives: it is to be both public service broadcaster and commercial operator. Mr Birt has successfully redefined its programme strategy, and positioned it to play a po-

tentially key role in the new digital broadcasting era. But it remains highly bureaucratic. The commercial duties are cared for by his deputy, Robert Phillips.

Several governors have confided that they are worried about the BBC's strategy, both within Britain and abroad, in the decade ahead. Sir Christopher is perfectly equipped to deal with this. Above all, he will have to ensure that not a penny of the publicly-raised licence fee goes into subsidising activities such as subscription channels: the last thing BBC governors want is to find the corporation pursued through the courts by its commercial rivals.

Mr Hussey has been one of the most reviled chairmen in the history of the BBC, not least because of his collective sacking of director general Alastair Milne in January 1987; it had never happened quite like that before. Mr Hussey leaves a huge legacy. Frank Gillard, a former BBC executive who is to find the material for a broadcasting history, says: "He transformed the place."

Water cuts threat lifted

Martin Wainwright

THE threat of rota cuts to water supplies in Yorkshire was lifted yesterday as applications for emergency drought orders were withdrawn by Yorkshire Water and the last road tanker operation was called off.

Two weeks of rain have taken all the county's reservoirs over the "safe" mark of 30 per cent for the first time since August, when some dams ran dry.

The company, which has spent up to £3 million a week since November on tankering and other emergency measures will end the first 110-lorry shuttle to the Huddersfield area by Friday.

John Layfield, Yorkshire Water's production director, said: "We cannot yet say the drought is over and we will not start taking emergency levels back badly. We are also retaining emergency abstraction orders for the rivers Ouse and Wharfe, as well as a ban on some car washes and hoses."

However, the company guaranteed that the idea of rota cuts would not be revived.

Mr Layfield said the firm's new £100 million water transfer network, due to be completed by March, would guarantee supplies "even if the driest winter ever is followed by the driest summer ever."

But with current steady rain predicted to last into next week, reservoir levels in the county are at a reassuring 29.6 per cent in Bradford, 28.8 per cent in Leeds, 24.9 per cent in Calderdale and 20.4 per cent in Kirkcaldy.

Northumbria Water last night announced a £1 million compensation package for householders cut off by the collapse of mains pipes in the thaw after heavy Christmas frost. It will pay £40 to every affected household — double the maximum £20 required by the water regulator Ofwat.

A total of 920,000 will be paid to individual customers, with another £80,000 for Wansbeck district council, which had to cope with the worst disruption in Ashington and Newbiggin-on-Sea.

Copter blast 'fireworks'

Tourist tells of RAF Chinook's last moments over Mull of Kintyre

Erland Clouston

AHOLIDAYMAKER yesterday described how he was almost caught up in a helicopter crash while hunting for remains of wrecked aircraft on a foggy Scottish island.

Russell Ellacott noticed a sudden increase in pressure and temperature shortly before he heard the noise of rotor blades and an explosion "like a fireworks display".

"It was almost like it went over us," Mr Ellacott, from St Leonard's-on-Sea, East Sussex, told the second day of the fatal accident inquiry into the crash of an RAF Chinook on the Mull of Kintyre in June, 1994. Ten RUC special branch officers, nine army intelligence officers and six MI6 members were among 29 killed in the accident, which a Ministry of Defence investigation blamed on pilot error.

Mr Ellacott told the Paisley, Strathclyde, inquiry that he and a friend went to the Mull

of Kintyre "to see what Paul McCartney was on about". A lighthouse keeper gave them directions to the site of a deserted village where they would find the remains of wartime aircraft. They were making their way along a track in thick fog when "there was a feeling of pressure and a warmth," he said.

"I instinctively made a duck," Mr Ellacott told John Mitchell QC for the Crown.

He went on: "There was a sound of helicopter blades for about three or four seconds, then a thud, then things going up in the air from the ridge where we had just walked.

"There was smoke, and things going up in the air. It was on fire — whatever it was that was going up in the air, it was on fire."

Smoke prevented them reaching the wreckage, but skirting round it they reached a flatter section of hillside where they found a body.

A yachtsman told the inquiry he had spotted the Chi-

nook "flying in straight and level flight" towards the Mull of Kintyre.

Mark Holbrook, a scientific instrument maker from Stewarton, Strathclyde, said sea level visibility was good as the giant helicopter headed towards Scotland on its flight from Belfast. He had presumed the Chinook was making for the RAF base at Machrihanish, a few miles to the north of the Mull of Kintyre, which he said was smothered in cloud.

Earlier, the inquiry heard how villagers in Northern Ireland had been intrigued by the Chinook's low height as it flew towards the Northern Irish coast.

Anne Tyler, aged 40, from Carnlough, Co Antrim, said she could see trees on the far side of the glen above the level of the helicopter. She had also thought there was something odd about the sound of the Chinook's twin engines.

"It was a very loud noise. There was something strange about it. It wasn't a familiar noise. Having said that, I'm no expert but I had a gut feeling there was something about that noise."

NHS market brings tenfold rise in redundancy costs

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

THE cost of redundancy pay-offs for National Health Service staff has soared almost tenfold since the Government introduced the market system, official figures show today.

The NHS in England alone spent £113.5 million on redundancy payments last year. In 1990/91, the year before the market system began, it spent £11.7 million.

The spiral has emerged as nursing unions claim that NHS trusts are cutting the jobs of nurses and other clinical staff under the drive ordered by Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, to reduce management spending by 5 per cent.

According to today's issue of Nursing Times, senior clinicians are being caught up in the drive. Unison, the biggest health union, says that of 20 jobs at risk at one trust, the Chesterfield and North Derbyshire royal hospital, a "negligible" number represent management.

The costs have been obtained through parliamentary

questions by Alan Milburn, a shadow health minister. They show that the total bill for pay-offs in England jumped to £32.8 million in 1991/92, to £28.5 million in 1992/93, and to £93.7 million in 1993/94.

The Department of Health said the figures reflected the "wave of bureaucracy" with the abolition of regional health authorities in April expected to save £150 million.

However, a breakdown of the figures shows that £75.1 million (66 per cent) of the costs last year were incurred not by health authorities but by trusts.

Ministers have acknowledged that trusts are making staff redundant through reviews of "skill mix" — the ratio of qualified to unqualified staff.

Mr Milburn said: "Only this Government could make multi-million-pound pay-offs a priority at a time when the NHS is crying out for more doctors and nurses."

The department said more NHS staff than ever before were now engaged in direct patient care — 66 per cent of NHS staff now, compared to 60 per cent 12 years ago.

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6 WORLD NEWS

Muslims get chance to rule Turkey

Jonathan Rugman in Istanbul

TURKEY appeared to be heading for prolonged political instability yesterday when President Suleyman Demirel announced that the radical pro-Islamic Welfare Party is to form the next coalition government.

Three killed in Toyota attack

LEFTWING extremists shot dead two leading Turkish businessmen and a company secretary at Toyota's headquarters in Istanbul yesterday.

One of the dead was Ozdemir Sabanci, aged 64, Toyota's chief executive in Turkey and a member of one of the country's richest industrialist clans.

The attack was believed to be timed to heighten the sense of confusion in a country which has been in a political vacuum since Tansu Ciller's coalition collapsed last September.

To make matters worse, the period during which Mr Erbakan has the chance to form a government does not begin until January 19. If he fails, Turkey could still be without a coalition government at the end of next month.

At Monday's opening of parliament, Mr Erbakan's 158 MPs joined in the traditional oath of allegiance to the secular republic.



A boy holds up a photograph of Yahya Ayyash, the Palestinian master bomber killed last week by a booby-trapped mobile telephone, during a memorial rally in Bethlehem yesterday. A warrant was issued for the arrest of Kamal Hamad, a fugitive building contractor believed to have supplied the phone used in the killing.

New tank better late than never

Suzanne Goldenberg in New Delhi

INDIA'S prime minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, yesterday unveiled the country's first domestically produced battle tank in what would have been a triumph of local engineering.

As day gave way to dusk, Mr Rao clambered up to the turret of the new buff-coloured tank, called Arjun. It lurched into motion with Mr Rao standing at the helm, clutching alternately at his white shawl and black cap.

was linked to reports late last year that India was contemplating a second nuclear test, following an underground explosion in 1974.

Although the missile systems are seen as the main success of India's defence programme, production of the intermediate-range Agni missile — seen as a defence against China — was halted last year because of costs.

News in brief

S Korea's president admits cash help

PRESIDENT Kim Young-sam of South Korea admitted wrongdoing yesterday in connection with political support he received before he became president.

Mr Kim said he took help from supporters for political activities before he was elected president in 1992.

Another former president, Chun Doo Hwan, is expected to be indicted on similar corruption charges.

Arafat wins financial aid

International donors pledged a total of \$1.57 billion (\$213.3 million) in aid to the Palestinian Authority yesterday, two weeks before the first elections in the autonomous West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Unita says yes to peace talks

UNITA, Angola's former rebel movement, said yesterday it had agreed with the government on a new timetable to put the country's peace process back on track.

Unita halted the demobilisation of its fighters under a 13-month-old peace accord late last year after government troops launched a fresh offensive against the rebels in the north.

Storm leaves death and chaos

A BLIZZARD which claimed at least 58 lives in the eastern United States, clogged city streets and kept students and government workers at home, has moved out to sea.

Most big airports from Washington northwards remained closed and flights were cancelled. One runway at New York's JFK airport opened yesterday morning after the wind died down, but delays were expected for a couple of days.

Strike paralyses Bangladesh

BANGLADESH was largely paralysed for a second day yesterday by an opposition-led general strike as a row over elections in February intensified.

He said the only way out of the country's long-running political crisis was the resignation of the prime minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, and a transfer of power to a neutral caretaker administration.

Spy-swap lawyer found guilty

WOLFGANG VOGEL, the former East Berlin lawyer who organised spy swaps during the cold war, was convicted by a Berlin court yesterday of extorting money from would-be East German emigrants.

Prosecutors said Vogel, one of the cold war's most shadowy figures, abused his position as East Berlin's unofficial East-West go-between to make East German emigrants sell their property at cut-price rates to leading Communists.

Mafia boss feared ridicule

TOMMASO BUSCETTA, the Mafia boss turned informer, gives evidence yesterday to Judge Francesco Ingroia at the trial of Giulio Andreotti, the former Italian prime minister, over his alleged ties with the Mafia.

Buscetta, who turned state's evidence in 1984, said he could have exposed Mr Andreotti's Mafia links more than 10 years ago, but he feared efforts would be made to discredit his evidence.

Mr Andreotti, who was prime minister seven times, denies charges that he served as the Mafia's chief political protector in Rome.



'Free my daughter' appeal

THE mother of a German tourist kidnapped a week ago by an armed gang in Costa Rica made a dramatic appeal for her release in a message carried on national radio and television.

"Niki is my only child, she is all I have," said Karen Fleuchaus, the mother of the kidnapped tourist Nicola Siegfried, aged 24.

Nicola's mother, who arrived in Costa Rica last week, recorded the message at a San José radio station.

Crackdown on 'plot to kill British envoy in Manila'

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Bangkok

BRITAIN'S ambassador to the Philippines is one of four Western envoys identified as assassination targets in a plot which yesterday prompted President Fidel Ramos to order a crackdown against militant Islamic groups from the Middle East and Pakistan.

Intelligence units were searching yesterday for five alleged members of an organisation named as Hezpel Dawah al-Islamiyah, reportedly led by an Iraqi explosives expert and with Lebanese, Palestinian and Bangladeshi members.

The five are said to have planned to murder ambassadors to the Philippines from Australia, New Zealand and Spain, as well as Britain.

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Herbal visionary surveys her turf

Jacqueline Weaver in Coventry, Connecticut

ADELMA GRENIER Simmons, who has inspired the planting of thousands of herb gardens across the United States, never tells her kitchen guests what they are eating until they have swallowed the last morsel.

Ms Simmons, founder of the Caprilands Herb Farm, does not want to intimidate those who might get like the idea of drinking sweet woodruff in their wine, or eating nasturtiums in their salad.

"Years ago, it was very common for people to pick the green out of their food, put it on a butter plate and send it back to the kitchen," Ms Simmons said.

But today her lectures are often booked out, as Caprilands benefits from the growing popularity of gardening, which has become a favourite pastime in the US, especially among baby boomers and pensioners.

Ms Simmons has written 48 books on herbal gardening, herbal folklore, and the use of herbs in cooking and decorating.

Free my daughter appeal

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Bangkok

BRITAIN'S ambassador to the Philippines is one of four Western envoys identified as assassination targets in a plot which yesterday prompted President Fidel Ramos to order a crackdown against militant Islamic groups from the Middle East and Pakistan.

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C&G Investment Rates Effective from 10 January 1996. Table with columns for Amount Invested, Interest Paid, Gross, and Net. Includes sections for Standard Deposit Accounts, Specialist Deposit Accounts, and Cash Reserves Accounts.

Arabic text: صكيات الامل

Military top brass publicly dressed down in Moscow as rebel commandos dig in under battle-hardened warlord

Vexed Yeltsin hunts for scapegoat

The chaos provoked by the latest bloody Chechen débâcle bodes ill for the beleaguered Russian president, writes David Hearst in Moscow

RUSSIA'S president, Boris Yeltsin, who has barely recovered from his second heart attack and is facing an uphill battle for re-election this summer, was plunged into a new political crisis last night by the seizure of hostages in the Dagestani border town of Kizlyar.

Summoning his top generals to an emergency meeting in Moscow, Mr Yeltsin angrily upbraided them in front of the nation's television cameras for letting Chechen rebels slip past thousands of Russian troops to stage what they had long been threatening: a repeat of last year's bloody

seize of a hospital in Budyonovsk, southern Russia. The prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, looked on uncomfortably as Mr Yeltsin stabbed his finger on the table, saying: "How should I understand this, gentlemen? Do you think this is kids' play? What have you done instead of effectively setting up outposts, building up forces and barring the way to the rebels?" Mr Chernomyrdin is acutely aware that Mr Yeltsin himself is the military commander-in-chief. The point was rammed home when the president's aides insisted Mr Yeltsin retained direct control of all the ministries which control armed forces,



view that defeat had been snatched from the jaws of a hard-won victory. The president had come under pressure from the United States president, Bill Clinton, to negotiate rather than obliterate. Besides, Gen Grachev is not

in charge: it is widely known that the war was officially over soon after his troops recaptured the Chechen capital, Grozny, in January last year. Mopping up operations were then transferred to the "civilian" authority of ministry of interior forces. The buck was passed from Gen Grachev to the then interior minister, Viktor Yerin, who in turn became one of the first casualties of the Budyonovsk fiasco. The man facing the full force of Mr Yeltsin's wrath yesterday was Anatoli Kulikov, whom the president had personally appointed to clean up the interior ministry's act. Mr Kulikov was caught completely unaware by the events of Kizlyar — he was "on holiday" when the incident occurred. He was one of those whom Mr Yeltsin claimed had "overslept". The chaos bodes ill for the

president himself. Having assumed the direct power of appointment of top generals, Mr Yeltsin appears to voters as ill-equipped to select the right people. The Kremlin's conduct of a war in which thousands of Russian troops and untold numbers of Russian and Chechen civilians have died, is littered with reversals, empty words, vacillation and incompetence. The professionals have been sidelined. In desperation for someone to blame, Mr Yeltsin turned on one of his closest allies, Andrei Nikolayev, head of the Russian border guard, blaming his troops for failing to protect the frontier between Chechnya and Dagestan. In reality, this border is an internal one and Mr Nikolayev's troops were not there in any number. Their responsibility is to protect the external borders of Russia.

It is not surprising that all the ministers present yesterday were apparently caught napping. They had deployed their forces to block the roads north, to protect the southern flank of Russia proper. Dagestan, east of Chechnya is a predominantly Muslim, north Caucasian republic. The Chechen fighters were not expected to attack their own brethren, whom they want to join in an independent Muslim "Confederation of Mountain Peoples". The attack on Kizlyar, about 75 miles north-east of Grozny, marks a dangerous turn of events in the tinderbox of the north Caucasus. There are more than 100 ethnic groups in Dagestan alone, and the border of the war is bound to have repercussions. Far from isolating the flames of Chechen rebellion, Moscow appears to have fanned them.

'Lone wolf' rules mountain roost

David Hearst in Moscow

SALMAN RADUYEV, the self-styled "lone wolf", is typical of Chechen field commanders. In their mountain villages, such men wield more power than their position suggests. Mr Raduyev, aged 29, the son-in-law of Chechen rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, first came to the fore in December 1994 when Russian sources accused him of "trying to stage provocations" against Russian troops in neighbouring Dagestan. His slogan then was "Let the Caucasus be ablaze". This prompted two unnamed Russian commanders to threaten to "wipe out" Mr Raduyev's clan. Mr Raduyev has been described as "perfect" of Gudermes, Chechnya's second city. His unit was the last to leave Gudermes before it was occupied by the Russians in December. A month later he was reported as saying he had supplied Mr Dudayev's relatives in Dagestan with 6,000 tons of diesel fuel which the Russians had given to Gudermes in aid. Mr Raduyev is said to be one of the organisers of last month's mass rebel attack on Gudermes, staged in an attempt to prevent the Moscow-backed government of Doku Zavgayev from hold-

ing elections for the Chechen leadership. The city was only recaptured after the Russians levelled the town centre, sustaining heavy casualties. Like other Chechen commanders, Mr Raduyev has surrounded himself with a core group of fighters whose first loyalty is to him — which poses problems for the Chechen independence cause. A similar figure is Shamil Basayev who led the mass hostage-taking in the southern Russian town of Budyonovsk last year. He and most of his men escaped unpunished. The newspaper Argument i Fakt, quoting "reliable sources", said recently that Mr Basayev was unhappy about the way field commanders were financed by Mr Dudayev. He reportedly threatened to declare his district, Vedeno, independent from Mr Dudayev. In the mountainous backwoods of Chechnya such threats are not idle. Mr Basayev's brother Shirvani is the commander of Vedeno, and in their freedom the Basayev name holds more sway than Mr Dudayev's. This is a medieval world of barons, whose troops are prepared to die for them and for Allah. Even if Chechnya were to win independence from Russia, it might not be long before the rival clan factions of the new statelet began to turn on each other.



Wolf in wolf's clothing... The Chechen rebel leader, Salman Raduyev, inside the seized hospital in Kizlyar yesterday

Countdown to hostage drama in Dagestan

Oct 1991: Soviet air force general Dzhokhar Dudayev wins presidential poll, amid claims of rigging, declares Chechnya independent. Nov 1991: President Boris Yeltsin declares state of emergency in Chechen-Ingushetia and sends troops to Grozny. Blocked at the airport, they pull out after three days. April 1994: Dudayev declares one-man rule. Nov 1994: Rebels attack Grozny with Russian tanks, although denied by Moscow. Russian planes bomb Grozny. Dec 11, 1994: 40,000 Russian troops move into Chechnya. March 1995: Grozny, in ruins, is taken. Dudayev threatens attacks in Russia. April 1995: Yeltsin orders unilateral ceasefire. June 14, 1995: Some 100 armed rebels take over 1,000 hostages in southern Russian town of Budyonovsk. June 18, 1995: With Yeltsin abroad, Russian prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin orders halt to storming attempts and negotiates with rebel leader Shamil Basayev. June 19, 1995: Gunmen return to Chechnya with remaining hostages, who are eventually freed. Peace talks are set up in Grozny. June 22, 1995: Two sides reach outline agreement to end hostilities. July 4, 1995: Yeltsin issues decree for permanent Russian army presence in Chechnya. Chechens claim this breaks previous agreement. July 30, 1995: Negotiators sign accord on gradual disarming of rebels in exchange for partial Russian pullout. Independence issue put on hold. Summer 1995: Yeltsin vetoes Dec 4, 1995: Car bomb for troop withdrawal and resignation of Moscow-backed officials, in return for Dudayev's resignation, pending elections. Sept 20, 1995: Oleg Lobov, Yeltsin's envoy in Chechnya, escapes attack near Grozny. Dec 4, 1995: Car bomb kills at least five near government offices in Grozny. Dec 14, 1995: Rebels seize Gudermes, Chechnya's second city. Forced out a week later with hundreds killed. Dec 17, 1995: Zavgayev wins presidential election. Jan 3, 1996: Lieutenant-General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov appointed Russian troop commander in Chechnya and declares all Chechen leaders, bar Zavgayev, to be bandits. Jan 8, 1996: Chechen fighters seize hostages in Kizlyar.

Tram killing rekindles fears in Sarajevo

Jonathan Steele

THE horror of rocket fire returned to Sarajevo yesterday as the first civilian victim since Nato forces took over peacekeeping duties from the United Nations last month. The rocket-propelled grenade, which hit a tram not far from "sniper's alley" where hundreds died in nearly four years of siege, came as Bosnian Serbs kept up their war of nerves to delay returning rebel-held suburbs to government control. One person died and at least five were wounded when the tram was hit near the Marshal Tito barracks by a grenade

fired from the Serb-held Grbavica sector. French troops fired back with 20-millimetre guns and small arms, and sent several armoured vehicles into the area. The grenade, which did not explode, went through the tram, hitting the man. "If it had gone off, casualties would have been much higher," a senior Western source said. One of the wounded, Nedzmina Cuprija, aged 35, said in Kosovo hospital: "The tram was packed. Everyone started screaming. I collapsed on the floor and someone took me out and put me in a car for the hospital. I ride trams all the time, but who could have anticipated this?" A seven-year-old boy was

hit in the head and shoulder by shrapnel. Earlier, less than two miles away across the old partition lines which must be dismantled under the Dayton peace accords, smoke and flames rose above Serb military facilities due to be abandoned. Bosnian Serb leaders have threatened to launch a scorched-earth policy and organise a mass evacuation of civilians unless I-POR, Nato's peace implementation force, agrees to delay the handover deadline. The Bosnian Serbs are due to abandon frontline positions and remove explosives and ammunition dumps by January 19. They must give up the rest of the area two weeks later.

Nato sources said the fires appeared to be part of the military withdrawal rather than the torching of civilian homes, as was first feared. They were detained in what is called "Muslim rule". The Bosnian Serb leadership has also been resisting I-POR's attempts to open Serb-held areas for civilians to pass through from the government side. Sixteen civilians were detained for several days and were only freed after intense diplomatic pressure. President Clinton is due to

visit American troops in Bosnia this weekend. But the new flare-up of tension in Sarajevo will raise doubts over whether he will have to confine his trip to trouble-free Tuzla in northern Bosnia, where most of the troops are based. The violence also shows the weaknesses of the Dayton peace accords, which did not provide for a powerful police force to protect civilians. Ironically, yesterday's attack coincided with the official end of the Sarajevo siege and the suspension of the UN airlift. The last sacks of flour were unloaded from a French C-130 aircraft and toasted with champagne at a farewell ceremony.

Russia selects 'troublemaker'

Our Correspondent in Moscow

YEVGENY PRIMAKOV, aged 66, the hardline chief of the foreign intelligence service, was last night appointed Russia's foreign minister, a key post in a year in which Russia will attempt to reassert its role as a Eurasian power. Washington sees Mr Primakov as a troublemaker, but officials were restrained in their comments about him yesterday. As a special adviser to the president, Mikhail Gorbachev, he played what the US saw as a spilling role in the run-up to the 1991 Gulf war by pressing the international community to give Iraq more chances to avoid outright conflict. Mr Primakov is an academic and Middle East specialist. He spent much of his life abroad as a journalist. US officials see Mr Primakov as a nationalist right-winger in his policies and political associations. He retains strong ties throughout the Middle East, including with President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. He is expected to promote a more assertive foreign policy, not necessarily as closely linked to that of the United States and the West as Russia's foreign policy has been since the collapse of the Soviet Union. He will be different in tone from his pro-Western predecessor, the former radical democrat Andrei Kozyrev, who resigned last week to take up a seat in parliament. "He was never a great admirer of the West, but he is a man without prejudice," said one insider. Mr Primakov clashed openly with the West in a report he presented in 1994, in which he accused the West of trying to impede the reintegration of the former Soviet republics. The new foreign minister will not be as vulner-

able as Mr Kozyrev was to political fire from the Communists and the nationalists. After four years of a foreign policy centred on Russia's relationship with the West, Russia is once again turning to its client states in the Middle East and Central Asia and to China for its main markets and partners. The centrepiece of President Yeltsin's foreign policy this year will be a delayed visit to Beijing and Shanghai, during which Russia will sign 20 agreements in an attempt to put relations on a new footing. Relations with the West have become bogged down over the issue of Nato expansion in eastern Europe, about which Russia is getting increasingly belligerent. For President Yeltsin, Mr Primakov is a clever appointment. With Chechnya in chaos, the president needs able deputies to cover his back, from the challenges of Communist and nationalist opposition.

Bildt struggles to make his mark in Bosnia

John Palmer in Brussels reports on the tough hand-to-mouth existence of the man monitoring the overall peace agreement

CARL BILD, the "high representative" charged with co-ordinating the civilian side of the peace settlement in Bosnia, found himself playing a role associated more with the underworld last week. He had to break off diplomatic efforts in Sarajevo to fly to Brussels, collect 300,000 German marks (£132,000), and bring the notes back to Sarajevo.

"I personally went to a bank in Brussels to withdraw 300,000 Deutschmarks, put the bag in my suitcase and returned to Sarajevo. I had to satisfy the bank about my identity but I intended heading back to Bosnia and would not be flying off to the Bahamas," the former Swedish prime minister explained yesterday. The episode highlights

the extraordinary contrast between the ambitious international project to enforce peace and help rebuild Bosnia and the bizarre hand-to-mouth organisation and financing of the operation. Mr Bildt was forced to bring cash with him into Sarajevo, because this was the only way he could pay for the offices and telephone lines needed to allow his embryonic mission to begin operating. "Everything in Sarajevo is done on a cash basis and the German mark is the local currency," he added. Life would have been much easier for Mr Bildt and his tiny staff if they had been allowed to move into the headquarters left behind in Sarajevo by the departing Unprofor mission. "For political reasons, especially because of the feelings of the United States Congress, it was essential to make a complete break

between the old UN operation and the new peace enforcement mission," Mr Bildt said. It seems that the remaining potential headquarters in Sarajevo were quickly secured by Nato for its I-POR command. "We are now building up to a Sarajevo staff of between 50 and 60 officials — as well as a headquarters in Brussels," Mr Bildt said. Mr Bildt is charged with monitoring the overall peace agreement and co-ordinating the different civilian operations. These include economic reconstruction (led by the World Bank), the establishment of democratic elections (the responsibility of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe) and the return of the refugees to their homes (the UN High Commissioner for Refugees). So far, all the funds to launch the civilian side of the peace implementation process have been provided by the European Commission and the European Parliament. The US, whose govern-

ment is locked in a budget dispute with Congress, has not yet paid any of its promised share. Earlier, Mr Bildt warned members of the European Parliament that without reconciliation between the former warring parties the entire peace process would fail. He echoed criticisms yesterday by the US presidential adviser, Robert Galucci, about Croat obstruction of efforts to unite the southern city of Mostar, the scene of violent confrontations recently between the nominally allied Bosnian Federation and local Croat forces. "The Croat government could do more to help in Mostar," Mr Bildt observed. British soldiers were subjected to torture including mock executions when they were held hostage by Bosnian Serbs last year, it has been claimed. The Yorkshire Post says treatment of some of the 300 peacekeepers who were captured last May, including 34 British soldiers, was in breach of the Geneva Convention.

Today, it is government that is destroying national monuments and anarchists who are trying to save them.
George Monbiot

Tinnitus Problems?

If you suffer from Tinnitus and experience symptoms such as ringing in the ears or buzzing, hissing, whistling or other sounds, you should know about a new book: *The Complete Guide to Tinnitus*. This book contains the latest information on Tinnitus what causes unwanted noises, how to deal with them and how to protect yourself from frustrating Tinnitus symptoms. The book gives you facts on the latest natural and medical remedies which can bring lasting relief from unwanted ringing and irritating sounds in your ears. You will learn all about new treatments and find out how and why they work. You'll discover how to protect yourself against Tinnitus, what drugs are recommended and how diet can be effective. You'll also discover how Tinnitus masking works, what other disorders are connected with Tinnitus and which foods can help you to hear better. Many people are putting up with irritating Tinnitus problems in 1996. Cheeky are not aware of new treatments and the welcome relief that is available. **THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO TINNITUS.** To order send your name, address and book title with payment (cheque or Visa/Access with expiry date) of £9.95 which includes postage and handling to Carnell plc, Dept Tin, Aylesford, nr Colchester, Essex CO7 8AP, or telephone their 24 hour order line on 01206 825600 (quoting reference T1). Allow up to 14 days for delivery. You may return the book any time within three months for a full refund if not satisfied.

Pride swells to soften grief

Alex Duval-Smith in Paris sees France coming to terms with François Mitterrand's death while, below, Serge July pays tribute to a leader whose life took almost exactly the course he planned

THE outpouring of national pride inspired by François Mitterrand's death looks set to do more for President Jacques Chirac's popularity than any of his policies to date.

In cafes and on media talk shows, the overwhelming feeling in the build-up to the former president's funeral tomorrow has been not of grief but of collective relief that France can still produce a historic figure.

Le Monde's leader yesterday afternoon, said that the death "of a great man makes France conscious of its place in history".

President Chirac has, for the first time since his election in May, showed proof of

having his finger on the nation's pulse. He has been generous about his predecessor's role in post-war French life and has ordered that flags be flown at half-mast.

"Chirac comes out of this very well. He is respectful and gentle with his words. That is what people want," said Jean Calvo, a 35-year-old architect reading Le Monde yesterday.

A few paces from the café, Pierre Blat, a 50-year-old vendor was taking comfort in the soaring sales of newspapers and magazines since news of Mitterrand's death.

"We usually sell about 100 copies a day of Le Monde. Unfortunately, their special edition on Monday afternoon was very late and we did not receive many copies."

In front of him were special editions of Paris-Match, L'Express magazine and Texte Integral, a publication which only appears after significant events. Each of the daily newspapers had produced supplements of up to 24 pages.

Mr Blat, who has worked in the kiosk for eight years, said: "I have never seen such interest in any event."

A middle-aged woman asked for a crossword puzzle book. Seeing the array of Mitterrand's name in red, white and blue on the cover of Paris-Match — she weakened. "I'll have one of those, too. I never agreed with Mitterrand but you have to admit that he shaped post-war history."

Television stations, with the single exception of the MCM music channel and the cable channel Canal + have all changed their schedules. Even the youth station M6, whose viewers are aged between 15 and 34, broadcast several clips about what they call the "Mitterrand Generation", those who knew no other president until Mr Chirac's election.

At Arte, the quality Franco-German channel founded under Mitterrand, Jérôme Clément, its managing director, said: "Mitterrand was a great promoter of the arts and architecture. His commitment to Europe is also a story for us because it is the essence of our existence."

Tomorrow morning, the

main television stations TF1, France 2 and France 3, will broadcast live from Jarmac where Mitterrand is to be buried. They will show pictures from the mass at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris which Mr Chirac and foreign dignitaries will attend.

Yesterday that Mitterrand first had inoperable cancer as far back as 1981, despite his promises to keep the public informed through regular health bulletins. President Chirac has failed to reveal any details about his health.

Yesterday, people continued to file past the front door of 9, Avenue Frédéric-Le-Play, the block of flats near the Eiffel Tower where Mitterrand died on Monday morning. Along the outside wall and attached to the doors were bouquets of flowers and hundreds of single red roses.

This evening, thousands of people are expected to return to Place de la Bastille where on May 10, 1981, they celebrated Mitterrand's first presidential victory.

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Agnelli hits at critics

On Monday the Times published an interview with Italy's foreign minister Susanna Agnelli as Italy prepares to take up the presidency of the European Union. The Times article said her "federalist programme" was likely to "ring alarm bells in Britain". Corriere della Sera asked her to respond



Susanna Agnelli: The Times mistaken in its criticism

"A S I recall, there were plenty of criticisms during the course of the last Italian presidency, particularly from the British. And I consider it in fairly poor taste for a European country to criticise the foreign policy of a fellow member nation or the person responsible for it, and I think it is even more gross that certain Italian politicians have been associating themselves with those criticisms levelled from abroad."

And what about relations with France? After the much publicised disagreements [about Italy meeting the convergence criteria in time to join the first wave into a single currency and over France's nuclear tests] President Chirac announced at the Madrid summit that it was all in the past. Did she agree that the two diplomatic services were looking for some way to reach a new understanding?

"It really is all in the past. Moreover, my relations with my colleague Hervé de Charette [France's foreign minister] have always been excellent even when he warned me that if, at the UN conference, we voted on the nuclear issue in the way we did subsequently vote, then he would not come to Naples. That's no question about our friendship with France."

There is the opening of the intergovernmental conference to revise the Maastricht Treaty. There is also the process of expansion which is set to change the face of the Union, and which will require a whole series of institutional and functional changes. Then there is the extension of the majority vote, and of course, the march towards a single currency.

"There are different points of view and interests but I feel that the majority of the countries involved still want Europe. This is the central issue, and it will have to lead to a compromise in the end. And here lies the importance

of our presidency and of those to follow."

The EU presidency is being taken up against a background of uncertainty in Italian politics, so would it have been better to vote [have a general election] first?

"Undoubtedly, but it's pointless talking about what's gone before. What our partners want is clarity and predictability. But we are unpredictable. After all the talk we might even end up doing the worst possible thing and holding the elections halfway through our EU presidency."

Having said this, we are well prepared for the presidency. We have excellent officials in both Rome and Brussels, so things would just carry on.

Plane 'shot down in failed Libyan coup'

ITALY'S former president Francesco Cossiga is due to appear next week before a parliamentary commission investigating the crash at Ustica on June 27 1980 of an Itavia DC-9 flying from Bologna to Palermo.

The cause of the crash remains a mystery after 15 years of investigations hampered by "suicides" of key witnesses and the destruction of evidence, such as air traffic control radar readings.

The parliamentary commission has uncovered new information from the personal archives of Demetrio Cogliandro, former head of Italy's secret service, which claims the aircraft was downed as the result of a botched attempt to kill Libya's Colonel Gaddafi, who was flying through the area. The files claim the DC-9 flew into the crossfire of a battle between French fighter jets and Col Gaddafi's MIGs; 89 people died when a French air-to-air missile hit it.

A number of "fake" Libyan MIGs were supposedly attempting to shoot down Gaddafi's aircraft in what was intended to appear as an internal military coup. But the MIG-23s escorting the Libyan leader engaged the at-

tacking aircraft and a full-scale battle ensued, with French fighter planes from a nearby aircraft carrier, supported by American P3 Orion radar surveillance aircraft, joining in.

It appears that a Libyan MIG was downed, Italy, under pressure from her allies, was left to conceal the real causes of the crash.

Mr Cossiga was transport minister at the time and is said to have been party to a government cover-up.

Corriere della Sera

A companion in times of change



FRANÇOIS Mitterrand died a free man. That was the obsession of his life. "There is not a force in the world in the face of which I do not feel myself to be free," the former president liked to say. He wanted, in a fanatical, opinionated, tireless, always implacable and sometimes cruel way, against the winds and tides, to be the author of his own life. And he will have succeeded, even delivering an ultimatum to the sickness that afflicted him for so long. That is without doubt what explains the exceptional fascination and the equally exceptional irritation, when not repulsion, he inspired during more than a half-century.

Francis Mitterrand, who dreamed of being a writer, will have written a bestseller: his political career. This will be the indelible stamp of the former president. He was the one who believed in politics when surrounded by those who no longer believed or believed in something else.

Francis Mitterrand, like all French people, had the passion of "grands hommes". Every people has its great men, but unlike in most countries, in France the grand homme is the object of a national religion. France is the only country to have a Pantheon, and it was there that Mitterrand began his first seven-year term, before he even entered the Elysée.

What distinguishes a grand homme of politics first of all is that he reigns or is ranked alongside that small group of those kings, cardinals, and emperors, presidents and heads of state whose personal ambitions were part of what made France what it is today.

Francis Mitterrand was a believer in history, unreservedly and without disillusionment, the history of men, nations and societies, the history of the balance of power, geographical determinants and collective invariables, as well in history dotted with apparently minor traces, all that remains after the passage

Chirac salutes a passion for life

Francis Mitterrand — a great will. He showed a willingness to serve the ideals of solidarity and social justice, and the humanism that has increasingly become entrenched in our country's traditions...

In politics Francis Mitterrand was always deeply respectful of human beings. He was always respectful of the rights of man, never ceasing to intervene whenever those were held up to ridicule...

But, Francis Mitterrand was above and before all a life... If his life was overflowing, it was because he had a great passion for life. Life in its dark hours and in its glorious moments.

of time, the erosion of stones and of memories. He loved trees, especially oaks, narrow paths and forgotten cemeteries, chilly museums, the warmth of eloquence that is not dry, the lasting quality of monuments. In short, the transformation of Paris.

He frequented all of these with the enjoyment of one who knows that history is tragic, that it grinds up human beings and that when an ambitious leader tries to conquer it, the result is painful for all concerned.

His presidency was dominated by six modernisations: economic, financial, institutional, media, European and geopolitical. Some of these were endured, others accepted for what they were, though they were rarely desired, apart from Europe. But changes of direction were made. In politics it is the event which rules. This attitude explains his flexibility when faced with the unexpected, his ability to manoeuvre day by day and let events take their course.

This did not stop Francis Mitterrand from making mistakes, but he did so without ideological obstinacy. This is how he was able to take key decisions, such as the abolition of the death penalty,

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Euro-missiles against the Soviet offensive in Europe, the 1980 economic watershed, the expanded European market, the two co-habitations with an opposition government, the double rescue of Yasser Arafat, participation in the Gulf war, then engagement in Bosnia, the refurbishment of the Louvre, the Maastricht treaty to accompany German reunification...

Francis Mitterrand presided over a fin-de-siècle world that was changing radically from day to day, inevitably, tossing aside everything in its path, particularly the landmarks and proven solutions of social democracy to which he was so attached. A new world, without full employment, uncertain, dislocated and subject to the slightest disturbance. Francis Mitterrand bent but never broke.

He would have preferred to manage growth rather than austerity, war rather than peace. But somehow or other, he managed to sort out this unexpected shambles, sometimes muddling through, even impotently, yet always there. He was not a visionary, but he was an exceptional companion in times of great change.

Francis Mitterrand dreamed of his life taking almost exactly the course it took: he acted it out and performed the roles he most desired to play. That is a rare privilege. He wanted to impose his name, his life story, his face, after those of de Gaulle. He won this, the greatest stake of his life.

It is true that whatever the quality of the man who succeeded him in the Elysée Palace, they will be less powerful than Francis Mitterrand. He was the last of the absolute presidents and the first to organise a relativisation of the power of the French presidency, thanks to the multiplication of instances of regulation, decentralisation and development of European and worldwide decision-making centres. That is the paradox of his life. He laid the foundation stones of the modernisation of French politics, yet he did not quite reinvent them.

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Marks of respect... holding a portrait of Mr Mitterrand a man waits to sign a condolence book outside the former president's office

El Prado's art buyers paint themselves into an over-priced corner

EL MUNDO

Ruben Amón in Madrid

SPAIN'S most famous art museum, El Prado, has gone on a spree buying fake or "medicore" paintings for which it has no use, an investigation alleges.

The art gallery in Madrid has squandered around 2000 million pesetas (£10.8 million) on paintings worth a

fraction of the price, according to a report from the International Foundation for the Protection and Distribution of Art.

Investigators claim a commission of buyers appointed by the museum's patrons has misused a legacy of some 8000 million pesetas left by a wealthy lawyer and art collector, Manuel Villaseca, who died in 1991.

El Prado's director José María Luzón said yesterday there was no evidence that

the commission had misused funds but admitted that some paintings had been bought at inflated prices. According to the report, however, the buyers not only made routine errors of judgment, but disregarded the last wishes of Villaseca who requested that his legacy be spent on "acquiring several works of art, or preferably one work of art, which the patrons judge most interesting, offered for sale abroad".

With a quarter of the legacy El Prado bought more than 100 paintings between 1991 and 1993, most from private collections. Only two were bought at auctions abroad, for 634 million pesetas.

"Very mediocre paintings have been bought at an extraordinary price. El Prado does not need most of the paintings," said Marias Diaz Padra, a world authority on Spanish painters and one of the Prado old-guard.

He spotted the inclusion of forgeries in a major exhibition of the Spanish painter, Diego Velázquez at El Prado, which is home to almost all the painter's works. Earlier this week his portrait of 17th century Pope Innocent X went on show at the gallery — an addition that is expected to draw thousands of new visitors.

One of the paintings that has raised questions about the competence of the buyers' commission is a work

by the 18th century still life painter Juan Sanchez Cotán. El Prado spent 450 million pesetas on his *Bodegón de Caca, hortalizas y fruta*. Sotheby's says the most fetched by a work by him at auction was 4.8 million pesetas for *Sagrada Familia con San Juanito* in February 1993.

Some purchases by the commission have aroused suspicion that individuals have benefited from what appears at best an ill-advised spending spree.

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Hungary's Gorbachev... Grosz oversaw the change to a market economy ANDRAS BANKUTI

Karoly Grosz

Leading Hungary into the market

KAROLY Grosz, who has died of cancer of the kidney aged 65, only served two years at the apex of power in Hungary, first as Prime Minister and then as Communist Party leader, but his brief time in office dramatically illustrated the explosive combustion of a one-party political system tries to convert a state-run economy to market principles. The old frame cannot remain, and those who promote the changes often get blown apart themselves.

Grosz was sometimes described as the Hungarian Gorbachev, and although there was one major point of similarity between them, the collapse of communism took place in different conditions from the way it fell apart in the Soviet Union. The Hungarian case, unlike the Soviet one, was a model where the transition to a capitalist system started well before the party was given for political pluralism.

What made Grosz look and sound a bit like Gorbachev was his comparative youth for an east European leader. He was 58 when he became the party's general secretary, succeeding János Kádár, who had served for more than 30 years. This, inevitably, gave him an image of dynamism and energy. But whereas Gorbachev was a unique figure in the top reaches of the Soviet hierarchy, the lone senior representative of an impatient generation of reformers lower down the ladder.

Grosz's sense that change was needed in Hungary was a commonplace. He was surrounded by other men who wanted a major overhaul of the Hungarian system. At the same time, the demand for change among the country's managerial and intellectual elite was far stronger than in the Soviet Union. Grosz turned out to be less adept at manoeuvring to stay in power than his fellow communist rivals. He also showed himself less willing to accommodate the new political forces within the Communist Party. Interestingly, it was Gorbachev who summed up the Grosz legacy with the best phrase, when in his recent memoirs he described Grosz's problem as "his leaning towards authoritarian methods".

Karoly Grosz was the son of a radical printer who had joined the then illegal Communist Party and was imprisoned for organising strikes. Grosz adopted his father's trade and politics, and joined the party after the second world war. He switched to a successful career as an apparatusnik, becoming party secretary of Hungarian radio and television at 31 and later heading the Central Committee's department of agitation and propaganda.

He then appeared to fall out of favour with János Kádár and was sent to run the party organisation in his hometown of Miskolc. But in 1964 he was brought back to Budapest to take the key job of heading the party structure in the

capital. Three years later he became Prime Minister. By then Hungary had already started on the road to a market economy. Hungarians were able to form private companies and commercial banks had come into being. Although these moves allowed for private initiative, they did not affect the core of the state-run economy which was open to international pressure. The slump in the world economy as well as the rise in Soviet energy prices caused a severe balance of payments crisis, and Hungary had the highest per capita debt of any eastern European country.

In order to cut the budget deficit and service the international debt, Grosz launched an austerity programme which slashed subsidies to loss-making industries, made thousands redundant, and imposed the first income tax and VAT in the communist world.

To combat popular dissatisfaction, Grosz and the other reformers responded to pressures for political liberalisation. They increased the powers of parliament, and accepted the right of citizens to organise politically outside the framework of the Communist Party. This was some months before Gorbachev launched such reforms in the Soviet Union.

Although the veteran party leader, János Kádár, tried to resist the changes, he had become isolated and his health was failing. Grosz succeeded him as party leader in May 1988 in a purge which also saw the removal of eight

of the Politburo's 13 members. But in a move which would hold down the post of Prime Minister for more than a few more months, hanging on to the two top jobs did not sit well with the aim of separating the party from the state.

With the pace of factional activity within the party increasing, and with new non-communist parties coming on to the scene, Grosz was unable to ride the tiger. In June 1989, he was forced to cede his control to a presidium which included three men more competent than he. Rezső Nyerés, an efficient technocrat who had succeeded him as Prime Minister, and Imre Pozsgay who advocated multi-party democracy.

A constitutional change was under way to create the post of president, symbolising the sidelining of the Socialist Workers' Party (as the communists were called). The presidium collapsed after four months and Grosz was left without a role when the party's reformist wing changed the name of the party and re-founded it on social-democratic lines.

Grosz had been the symbol of transition, but he was never its real substance.

Jonathan Steele
Karoly Grosz, politician, born August 1, 1930; died January 7, 1996.

Letter

Abram Sterne writes: It was morally repugnant, and typical of current journalism to read in your obituary of Yehuda Ayzn (January 8), an article lauding the technological skills and abilities of a man (a terrorist) who enjoyed killing men, women and children on buses in Israel. I find it hard to imagine that any newspaper would print an obituary of IRA bombers assassinated by the British government. This makes me wonder what the difference is in this particular instance.

Birthdays

Sir Walter Bodmer, FRS, geneticist, director-general, Imperial Cancer Research Fund, 60; Eddie Cheever, racing driver, 38; Prof Rodney Eatoack Taylor, mechanical engineer, 52; Ann Firbank, actress, 53; Derek Hammond-Stroud, baritone, 70; Dorothy Malone, actress, 71; Alan Protheroe, journalist and broadcaster, 63; Max Roach, jazz drummer, composer, 71; Prof Elizabeth Robson, geneticist, 68; Anton Rodgers, actor, 63; Tony Soper, natural history film director, 37; Rod Stewart, rock singer, 51; Valerie Strachan, chairman, HM Customs and Excise, 55.

Yesterday's Birthdays

Maj Derek Allhusen, Olympic equestrian, 82; Joan Baez, singer, 56; Sir Rudolf Bing, founder of the Edinburgh Festival, 93; Ken Bruce, golfer, 38; Dorothy Davies, secretary general, International Federation of University Women, 54; Clive Dunn, actor and comedian, 74; Graham Fletcher, show-jumper, 45; Crystal Gayle, singer, 47; Barry Hancox, theatre and opera director, 53; David Holbrook, author, 73; Ray Houghton, footballer, 34; Prof Sir Alec Jeffreys, geneticist, 48; Simon Jervis, historic buildings secretary, the National Trust, 53; Herbert Lom, actor, 79; Michael Nicholson, broadcaster, 58; Jimmy Page, rock guitarist, 52; Joely Richardson, actress, 31; David Smith, cricketer, 40; Freddie Starr, comedian, 52; Scott Walker, singer, 53; Geoffrey Wragg, racehorse trainer, 66; Suzanne York, actress, 54.

Death Notices

BROOKER, Kenneth. On January 7th 1995 peacefully in hospital beloved husband of Jean Brooker, aged 84 years. Burial at St. Mark's Church, London. Family and friends are requested. Funeral Monday, January 8th, 11.30am at St. Margaret's Church, Putney Park Lane.

BROWN, Ian. On 6th January 1996, Pauline Brown, aged 84 years, beloved wife and friend. Funeral service to be held at St. Mark's Church, London, on Thursday 10th January 1996 at 11.30am. In lieu of flowers please send donations to the British Heart Foundation. Family and friends are requested. Funeral Monday, January 8th, 11.30am at St. Margaret's Church, Putney Park Lane.

DAVIES, John. On 6th January 1996, John Davies, aged 84 years, beloved husband of Marion Davies. Funeral service to be held at St. Mark's Church, London, on Thursday 10th January 1996 at 11.30am. In lieu of flowers please send donations to the British Heart Foundation. Family and friends are requested. Funeral Monday, January 8th, 11.30am at St. Margaret's Church, Putney Park Lane.

DEARBORN, Charles William. On the 6th January 1996, Charles William Dearborn, aged 84 years, beloved husband of Marion Dearborn. Funeral service to be held at St. Mark's Church, London, on Thursday 10th January 1996 at 11.30am. In lieu of flowers please send donations to the British Heart Foundation. Family and friends are requested. Funeral Monday, January 8th, 11.30am at St. Margaret's Church, Putney Park Lane.

HEWSON, John. On 6th January 1996 in Norwich peacefully in hospital beloved husband of Jean Hewson, aged 84 years. Burial at St. Mark's Church, London, on Thursday 10th January 1996 at 11.30am. In lieu of flowers please send donations to the British Heart Foundation. Family and friends are requested. Funeral Monday, January 8th, 11.30am at St. Margaret's Church, Putney Park Lane.

MAWSON, Rose. On 6th January 1996, Rose Mawson, aged 84 years, beloved wife of John Mawson. Funeral service to be held at St. Mark's Church, London, on Thursday 10th January 1996 at 11.30am. In lieu of flowers please send donations to the British Heart Foundation. Family and friends are requested. Funeral Monday, January 8th, 11.30am at St. Margaret's Church, Putney Park Lane.

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Seton Lloyd

A long interval in Iraq

SETON LLOYD, archaeologist and emeritus professor at the Institute of Archaeology, University of London, who has died aged 92, was the last survivor of a generation that had established the special procedures necessary for excavating ancient Near Eastern mounds. Seton, the second of eight children, was born into a family which had Quaker antecedents and was connected with Lloyds Bank (his grandfather had been a director) and insurance. His father, director of a pharmaceutical company, was a "shadowy" figure who became stone deaf during his honeymoon so that relationships with his children were difficult. Seton's mother was from a military family and he adored her.

He grew up in Edgmonton, Birmingham, surviving polio when he was nine, and went to school at Uppingham, studied at the Architectural Association in London and spent two years at Sir Edwin Lutyens's assistant before setting up a small, private architectural practice with two friends in 1928. That same year one of his partners got engaged to be married and was not, therefore, in a position to take up the post of architect on an archaeological excavation in Egypt. Seton went instead.

This began the "professional transformation" which was to produce one of this century's great field archaeologists. The sites was Tall el-Amarna, the one-generation Akhenaten in the 14th century BC. The director, Henri Frankfort, engaged Seton for his next venture on behalf of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, namely the excavation of a series of sites in the Diyala region north-east of Baghdad.

These excavations produced the framework for the previously little-known Early Dynastic Period (3000-2300BC) in Mesopotamia and perfected the technique of tracing mud-brick walls which had first



Archaeologist, Seton Lloyd

and Hyde travelled extensively throughout Turkey and welcomed many to the Institute, including myself for whom the experience led to a career in archaeology. He retired as director in 1961.

He and Hyde spent much time and love on Woolstone Lodge, their beautiful house just below the Uffington White Horse, where he could indulge in two favourite pastimes, fishing and shooting.

In 1962, he succeeded Max Mallowan as Professor of Western Asiatic Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, part of London University. Here many of us benefited from his first-hand knowledge of sites, pottery and artefacts, his ability to make a ground plan come alive, and his well-ordered lectures.

Seton also continued to write for the general reader as well as for the specialist. His reports on his excavations, contributing articles to learned journals and writing book reviews. The bibliography published in the Festschrift volume of the journal *Iraq* in 1962, several volumes of which he edited, included (1961 with F. Safar and M.A. Mustafa) and *Ancient Turkey* (1968).

Seton's career did not go unrecognised. He was awarded an OBE in 1949, and a CBE in 1967. He became a Fellow of the British Academy in 1955 and was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. He received the Lawrence of Arabia Memorial Medal in 1971 and the Gertrude Bell Memorial Medal in 1979. In 1980 he received an Honorary MA from Edinburgh University, was made Emeritus Professor upon his retirement, and had Festschrifts dedicated to him.

He has passed on his knowledge to several generations of archaeologists now working in museums and universities all over the world, and through his writings, has made Near Eastern archaeology come alive. He called his memoirs *The Interval* — a reference to Santayana: "There is no cure for birth and death but to enjoy the interval." He made full use of that interval.

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Joyce McCartan

Tea and sympathy

WHEN Joyce McCartan, who has died aged 66, met Hillary Clinton she gave the first lady a new phrase. "I'm a family feminist," she told Hillary Clinton over a cup of tea at her women's drop-in centre in Belfast's Ormeau Road. "I think I'll use that, I'm one of those too," came the reply.

Recognition came near the end of a hard life for McCartan, a veteran women's and human rights campaigner who had lost 14 members of her extended family in Northern Ireland's political violence.

Joyce moved to Belfast with her husband, Seamus, more than 40 years ago. Like many, they came to the city in search of work and a better life, but when the Troubles began her name became a byword for grief as the McCartan family earned the appalling distinction of losing the greatest number of family members to terrorist violence.

A mother of eight children, the greatest pain of all came when her 17-year-old son Gary was shot dead by the loyalist paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force on the doorstep of the family home in 1967. Joyce heard the



Peacemaker... Joyce McCartan with Hillary Clinton who she met in 1995

gunshots from the women's centre which was only a few streets away.

By the time of her son's death she was a veteran of many non-sectarian campaigns to improve life for the working class of Belfast.

Joyce organised her first demonstration, against then-education minister Margaret Thatcher's decision to stop free milk in schools. She was thrown out of Belfast City Hall for bringing a cow to demonstrate her point that this was the beginning of the Women's Information Network, an organisation which now has branches right across Northern Ireland.

She became renowned for her anti-sectarianism and campaigns for what she called the bread and butter issues of health and education.

The culmination of her campaigning was when Mrs Clinton visited the Lamp-lighter, a fish and chip shop and meeting place for Protestant and Catholic women which she founded. "There's a lot of healing to be done on both sides. And I think it's up to the women on the ground to achieve that," she told Mrs Clinton. "I'll take women to bring men to their senses here in Northern Ireland."

The next day in Dublin —

holding a large, stainless-steel teapot that Joyce had given her from the cafe — just because she had admired it — Mrs Clinton spoke of the contribution McCartan had made to the IRA and loyalist ceasefires.

Joyce was awarded an MBE in 1992 and an honorary doctorate from the Queen's University in Belfast last year.

Upon receiving it, she expressed surprise that a woman who left school at the age of 14 should be given such an award. "I learned everything I know from experience. It's a good teacher."

The MBE brought criticism from some quarters within her nationalist neighbourhood on the Lower Ormeau Road in south Belfast. But her acceptance was typical for a woman who shunned tribal politics in favour of building common cause, particularly between Protestant and Catholic women.

Her autobiography, *A Battle All My Life*, was published last year. She leaves her husband, Seamus, and seven children.

David Sharrock
Joyce McCartan, peace campaigner, born November 26, 1929; died January 8, 1996

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Taking to the lifeboats

But political fashions change. So do allegiances

TO JUDGE by the mood around the House of Commons yesterday afternoon you would think that Tony Blair was now officially prime minister-in-waiting...

economic indicators looked good for the Government, because Labour still had a lot of convincing to do on economic policy and — not least — because this all added up to the received wisdom...

The talk at Westminster is of a washed-up parliamentary session, fresh Conservative defections, inevitable Tory losses in the two forthcoming by-elections and a rout in the May local elections...

To be sceptical about the new dismissive wisdom towards the Conservatives is neither perverse nor faint-hearted. No one denies that they are unpopular or dispirited most of the reasons...

In the footsteps of Marmaduke

Sir Christopher may (even) be the right man for the job

IT IS tempting to dismiss Sir Christopher Bland, former Conservative candidate and chairman of the Bow Group, as a placeman slotted into the chairmanship of the BBC to keep Tory values alive at a national institution even if the party itself sinks without trace...

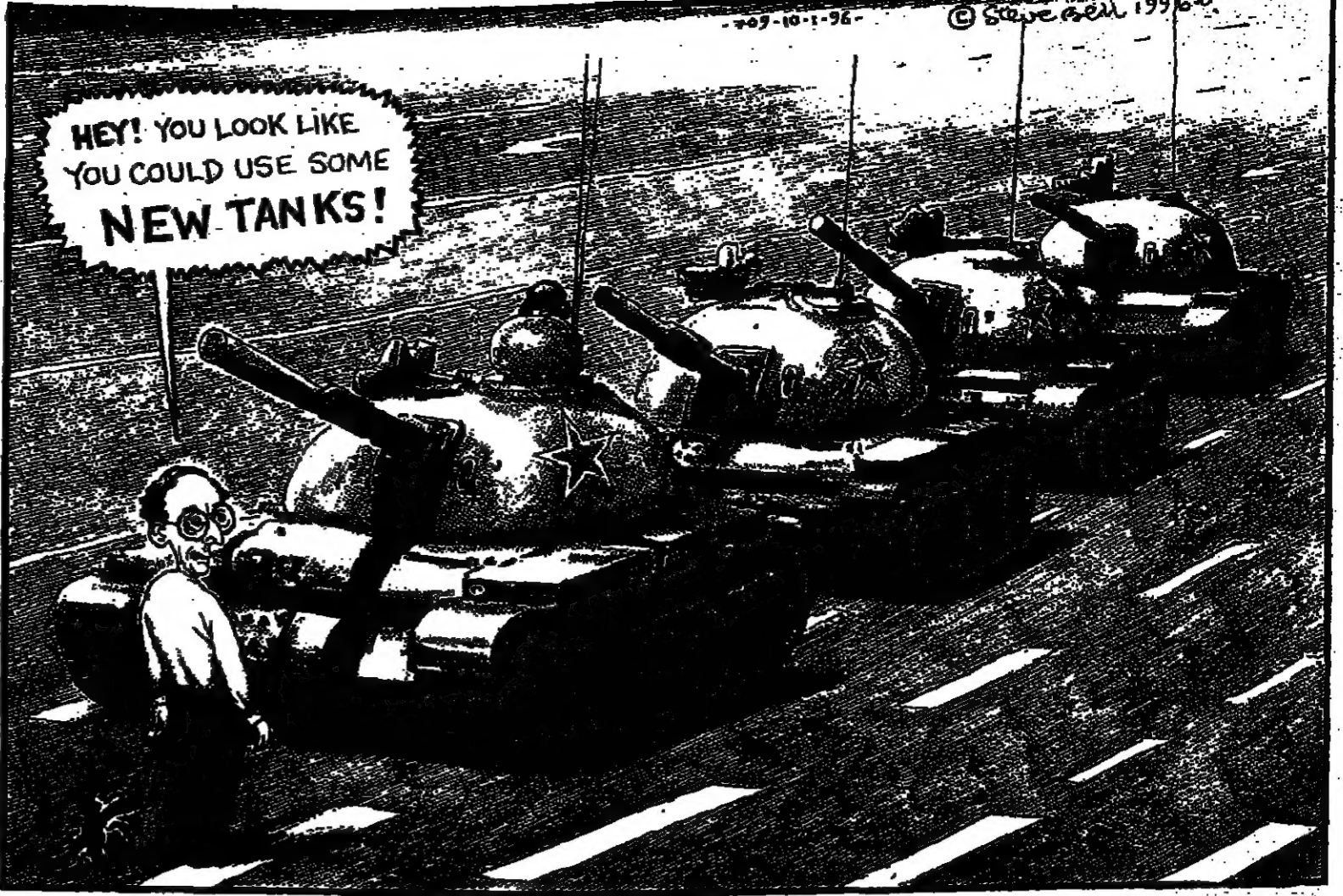
the organisation to be unfitted for the job, but who managed with Birt to negotiate the BBC's survival into the post-Thatcher era. What the BBC now urgently needs, and which Sir Christopher could provide, is strong business leadership to exploit the world-wide commercial potential offered by its new charter in the digital age...

China blinks under the spotlight

Justified criticism is a better tactic than a political crusade

THE CONDITIONS in China's orphanages, revealed by Human Rights Watch/Asia (HRWA), are deeply disturbing. China under Deng Xiaoping has been praised for its rapid economic progress. Chinese society is becoming more diverse and open in spite of political stagnation...

evidence justifies the charge that the Chinese government, as a matter of policy, encourages "death by default" in its institutions. HRWA says the high death rates "are the result of a deliberate policy to minimise China's population of abandoned children..."



Letters to the Editor

All-women lists short of support

THE mess Labour has got itself into over all-women shortlists has obscured the real problem facing everyone trying to get more women into Parliament. That is how to reconcile the principle of increasing women's representation...

What mid-life crisis?

ANGELA NEUSTATER'S article (Mid-life crisis: you're not alone, January 4) was appropriate company for the post-Christmas blues. I and many post-50 colleagues have one small additional symptom to add...

working life to take over one's entire existence? Valerie Clarke, 15 Farncombe, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 3HR.

GOOD heavens! If people were beginning to feel old at 40-plus, they do need something to think of outside of themselves. Wait till they are 70-plus, when hearing, sight and memory begin to desert them...

Dennis Nilsen: why I killed

DUNCAN CAMPBELL (Most fool, January 3) suggests that I was motivated by "homophobic" in that I killed gay men because they were gay. Before, during and after my offences I was (and am) decidedly gay and have never been ashamed of that...

I'll turn 60 in a few weeks' time...

I'll turn 60 in a few weeks' time, hence qualifying for an old age pension — a distinct plus. I am a teacher and, apart from four and a half years when my children were small, I worked full-time until just over three years ago...

AS ONE who is celebrating my 52nd birthday next month...

AS ONE who is celebrating my 52nd birthday next month, I have plenty of experience of middle and old age. It's a throw-back to the dreadful "Me" syndrome — me, me. These people are all too young to remember dear Arthur Me...

I've changed my mind about the secret of eternal middle age

I feel concerned for these people who seem so obsessed with success and who see it only in terms of their jobs. They are so desperate to get to the top, and devastated when they either do not quite make it, or having reached the summit, fail to cling on...

I WAS told in 1938: 'Today's cream is tomorrow's sour milk'...

I WAS told in 1938: "Today's cream is tomorrow's sour milk." It is very true. I was born in 1921 and I have never been the "cream".

BFI panned

ROS COWARD is quite right in her assessment of the British Film Institute (Comment page, January 8; Letters, January 9). But it never was set up as a "democratic" institution...

History lesson

BEFORE Roy Hattersley gets carried away by his own indignation at the Government's vile behaviour towards Dr Mohammed al-Mas'ari (Endpiece, January 8) he might recall a similar case in the spring of 1977...

It's good to talk (and talk and talk)

I HAVE just set a new radio phone-in record: appearing 31 times, spread over 14 stations in 1995. Not one of these broadcasts had to be abandoned for a bad line or other faults...

The burning issue along the corridors of Whitehall

FEAR that Ian Bancroft and later correspondents have not seen the Government's proposal to sell the Recruitment and Assessment Services Agency (RAS) as a threat to the long-standing Civil Service policy of fair and open competition...

A Country Diary

TAMAR VALLEY: Towards mid-day morning sun reflects on a mirror of mud beneath flat reed beds. From Cotehele to Halton Quay, an expanse of reeds fringes the river, separated from Etheric Ma'sh by a flood defence bank...

History lesson

THE BBC World Service (Letters, December 1 & 30, January 2 & 8) is clearly too dangerous for us to hear: we are only allowed to listen to it nationwide between 1 am and 5.50 am...

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BEFORE Roy Hattersley gets carried away by his own indignation at the Government's vile behaviour towards Dr Mohammed al-Mas'ari (Endpiece, January 8) he might recall a similar case in the spring of 1977...

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صكمان الاميل

Diary
Matthew Norman

THERE is mixed news today on the mental state of the Defence Secretary. It has been officially confirmed that Polly Portillo has amnesia: in accusing Emma Nicholson of disloyalty to John Major, for example, he had zero recollection of the 40 phone lines he had installed during last summer's leadership election. That's the bad news. The good news is that he is not, as first suspected, afflicted by a more serious condition. When on Monday he declared himself the victim of "a witch hunt" by his own Tory colleagues, psychiatrists assumed he was in the grip of persecution mania. However, the country's foremost authority on paranoia, Professor Fatty Soames, has dismissed this, and indeed tells Boris the Jackal Johnson that his boss is a saint. "He's a very, very big man [from Fatty's high praise indeed], and that's a fact. When I made a cock-up about something, he was solid. He's a good egg. I say: 'so the lot of them. Portillo contra mundum. Whoopie.' Taken with this parting 'whoopie', Fatty's adroit use of the coded term "so the lot of them" clinches it: Polly isn't paranoid at all, and everyone really is out to get him. What a tremendous relief.

MR GRAHAM Kelly's correction to yesterday's report, it appears that the FA chief executive's joke about enlarging football goals, made last April 1 on BBC1, was not his first. It is now believed that he first made one in a speech at a football fanzine award ceremony three years ago, and that it went down very well. My apologies to Mr Kelly for any distress caused. News of further sightings of escapees from Mr Kelly's comical repertoire will be gratefully received.

MONDAY night's Panorama, on the dangers of Doxy Dorrell's new safe drinking limits, has caused huge merriment among the staff of the liver unit at King's College Hospital in London. They were visible in the background while Professor David Williams, a world-renowned specialist, issued apocalyptic warnings about the dangers of even moderate drinking, holding up some perforated, selective livers to illustrate the point. It is perhaps as well, then, that the professor did not stay the course at the liver unit's Christmas party. One who did reports that it began with a champagne reception, continued with about two bottles of wine per head over dinner, and ended with lashings of port. The party then went upstairs to the boardroom, where staff pulled down the Christmas tree before setting off fire alarms. It is rumoured, meanwhile, that the evening ended when a couple were caught in flagrante delicto in the hospital chapel.

AMONG the many gifts of Paul Dacre, the Daily Mail's manly editor, is the ability to relax (often, of course, by digging his nails into his back until he draws blood) in the face of great pressure. Indeed, when abroad on holiday, he rarely rings the office more than four times a day. It is significant, then, that on last week's jaunt to Madeira, the number rose to 20, as he strove to keep tabs on the continuing exodus from his title: two reporters were talking of moving to the Daily Express. Happily, though, Mr Dacre has managed to keep them. Whether this is due to the editor's personal charm, or to the massive salaries of Paul Harris and Edward Verity (a £20,000 a year as a matter of conjecture).

THE Sun reports that Joyce Ingills, who has been in the life of Anthony Hopkins, also had an affair once with Tom Jones (beneath whom she no doubt flattened some of the green, green grass of home). Leading psychiatrists (the same ones, oddly enough, who spoke to me about Polly Portillo) believe that Miss Ingills's fetish is harmless, but appeal to her to seek help should she develop any plans for Harry Secombe.



Keep right on for the ends of the party

Commentary Will Hutton

BRITAIN as a Great Power with global interests and global security concerns is an image that dies hard. Indeed, it remains precisely the correct course for the country and party alike. The strategy may require a little reworking to accommodate Britain's economic realities — but this, rather than more defence and foreign-policy integration in Europe, is the way forward.

Michael Portillo's visit to Japan over the last four days — with his pledge of more defence co-operation between the Japanese and British, with Britain offering to train Japanese troops for peace-keeping roles — is thus no journeyman visit in the Defence Secretary's diary.

Like Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind's grandiose floating of a European/North America free-trade area, it represents part of the Conservative Party's redefinition of Britain's security and foreign policy as the party swings to the barely concealed nationalist right.

Portillo will want to dress up his speechifying as not altering Britain's traditional defence posture in any way; more so cash constrained. Indeed, so cash constrained has Britain's defence operation become, that there was little hint of joint exercises or any of the other paraphernalia of defence co-operation. Yet for a largely symbolic gesture, the Defence Secretary has risked the wrath of British veterans of the second world war with Japan — one of the most easily anticipated reactions in British politics — in order to maintain his stock with the Euro-sceptic right as the globalist rather than the European. The global power must construct a global network of defence co-operation between sovereign nation states — and Europe's efforts to develop the Common Security and Foreign Policy can go hang. "We are," he declared, "a global trading, global investing, globally conscious nation."

Without the US in Europe, the European security effort would be seriously disabled; the truth is that the British and French, the continent's chief military powers, have to

including Australasia. But the brutal economic, political and diplomatic realities are that the fulcrum around which Britain's interests turn remain in Europe and North America. Britain would not go to war in Vietnam in the 1960s; 30 years later there are no interests in Asia for which a British government could countenance the death of a single British grenadier — except perhaps in some generalised world conflict. To even hint at anything different is folly.

Where Portillo was right in his Tokyo speech was to argue that it is vital to Asia, and Europe's security interests, that the US remain committed to the security of both regions. It is not merely that, as events in Bosnia underlined, even regional powers like Britain and France can make little progress in their own sphere of influence without the diplomatic weight of the US. The reality of current military technology is that only a superpower can afford the panoply of spy satellites, military intelligence, capacity to move a critical mass of troops and armour internationally, and so on, that makes even a regional security posture credible.

By putting career and party faction before the national interest Portillo was bound to evoke a strong reaction

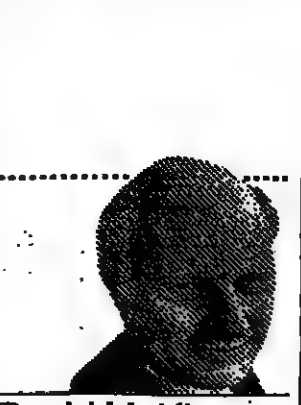
London committed to building a European defence effort; not a government riding on American coattails pointing about with Japanese security collaboration. This is scarcely surprising. The US stock of direct investment in Europe is vast; and the more capacity Europe has to organise and police its own affairs, the less American presidents will have to run the gauntlet of an increasingly isolationist Congress in calling for spending to defend Europe. Accordingly the US has stood benignly by and allowed the

Europeans to develop the Western European Union, the forum for specifically European defence collaboration within Nato; there is no doubt that they would be happy for the Europeans to build up the WEU so it came to represent the European Union's sole political voice inside Nato.

The military functions of Nato would remain as they are — but its political organisation would change substantially. Membership of the WEU would have to be restricted to EU members, hardly difficult as no non-EU states are in it — but Austria, Denmark, Spain, Finland and Ireland would have to join up to the EU's security wing. This is hardly a revolutionary idea, and the result would be to equip Britain and Europe with a capacity to organise security policy in the Mediterranean, Baltic, Balkans and eastern Europe with more coherence than they do now. European security would be enhanced; and Britain's long-run interests better served.

The political trouble is that this is the policy advocated by those the Eurosceptics portray as selling Britain's interests short — like the Eurosceptics at the Federal Trust who recommend just this policy in their recent paper, The Security of the Union. It would require a symbolic speech, not in Tokyo about globalism but in Brussels urging a bigger role for the WEU — anathema to every Eurosceptic and rightwing newspaper in the land. Portillo complains that he is the object of a plot by leftwing Conservatives to damage him politically. He should not be surprised. A politician who so palpably puts his career and party faction before the national interest is bound to evoke a strong reaction. The wonder is that it has taken so long for the rest of his party to notice.

Whose insult is it, anyway?



David McKie

A FEW days ago he was only "a creep" (Lord Hill-Norton). Since then he has been promoted: according to Emma Nicholson yesterday, Michael Portillo is now a cowardly creep. Serves him right, no doubt, for suggesting the party would be better off without her and her Euro-federalism. Even so, since, despite the Prime Minister's moving appeal for calm, the Tories' uncivil war is set to continue, could we, the defenceless audience, perhaps be treated in future to a higher class of calumny? Perhaps the trouble is that we're spoiled. We read what Disraeli said about Gladstone (and, rather less often, what Gladstone said of Disraeli) and tend to assume that the insults cracked like that all the time. But several allow years and bruising debates may have passed between a sophisticated rhetorician intoxicated with the exuberance of his own verbosity, and my favourite slur of all: "he has not a single redeeming defect."

of privilege, also known as Rhoda the Rhine, a bargain basement Bodicea, Virago Intacta, a Uvas Tree in whose shade everything dies, and Attila the Hun. Not all of these were necessarily original. Matthew Parris (see below) attributes Attila the Hun to Clement Freud. Healey also invoked the Uvas, as did Roy Jenkins, to describe David Owen. Healey further said of Owen: "The good fairy gave the young doctor almost everything: thick dark locks, matinee idol features, a lightning intellect. Unfortunately, the bad fairy also made him a shite." Not, I think, the kind of language you'd get from Roy Jenkins.

Politicians like you to think that lines like these simply come to them, even while they are speaking. Some do; many others don't. "Winston has devoted the best years of his life to preparing his impromptu speeches" — P E Smith.) Yet some famous lines cannot have been re-cooked. Someone said in the presence of Ernest Bevin that Herbert Morrison was his own worst enemy. "Not while I'm alive, he ain't," said Bevin. Ted Heath, who is often wittier than the outside world suspects, being asked why he thought Margaret Thatcher disliked him so, replied: "I am not a doctor." I once heard Jeremy Thorpe destroy a lugubrious speech by an Ulster Unionist in a suit two sizes too large for him by asking a passing nurse as he lumbered into his personal "I say — who's this fellow's tailor?" Another rule of the game: an impromptu word straight from the heart scores more than even the brightest sally dreamed up a few hours before in the bath. Tony MacDonald to "the Boneless Wonder" — a freak in a Barnum circus to which he'd been taken as a child — and called Attila "a sheep in sheep's clothing". Both promptly entered the language. That's another rule: the target needs to be someone that people have heard of. "He can best be described," Churchill said of a critic, "as one of those orators who, before they get up, do not know what they are going to say; and when they are speaking, do not know what they are saying; and when they have sat down, do not know what they have said." But no one remembers that, because no one remembers the victim, Lord Charles Beresford.

One problem with the Commons today is that it has recently lost a master vituperator and shows no sign of replacing him. The most celebrated insult of modern times is probably the one he produced in response to an attack by Sir Geoffrey Howe: "Like being savaged by a dead pig." But that, by Denis Healey's standards, was affectionate. There was much less warmth for the La Pasionaria

Further reading: Scorn, With Added Vitriol, by Matthew Parris (Hamish Hamilton); The Book of Political Quotes, by Jonathan Green (Angus and Robertson)



It is time the left dropped its knee-jerk opposition to selective schooling, argues Stephen Pollard; as Gillian Shephard has realised, parents will vote for choice

Playing to win

EUPHEMISMS are employed in few areas more widely than education. School "specialisation" is good. "Focus" — allowing a school to make special provision for the admission of children who are, for instance, musical — is wholesome and fosters children's abilities. "Selection", however, is bad, ignores the needs of the less academic, and leads to a divided society.

Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools reports consistently show that only 70 to 80 per cent of lessons are satisfactory — or that one in every four is unsatisfactory. Comprehensive schools are based on the idea that the first is social engineering. As Tony Croxall put it in 1966, education should be seen "as a serious alternative to nationalisation in promoting a more just and efficient society". That view is now represented most eloquently by Roy Hattersley.

The second is academic. To overcome the failure of the secondary-modern and technical schools, we would destroy the successful grammar schools, force high achievers into mixed-ability classes and watch the less academic pupils improve through example. A nice idea, perhaps, but we are still waiting. All that has happened is that, as a result of the acknowledged failure of comprehensive schools have to overcome their inability to stretch all pupils by attempting to set and to stream — the educational equivalent of trying to play Rugby League and Union on the same pitch.

dragging Labour back into the real world. Every one of the countries idolised by the post-war British left, such as Sweden, Austria, Germany, Denmark and France, has a selective education system. For selection by ability is a deeply socialist concept. The old and successful notion of the grammar school, that emanated from the same liberal or Whig intellectual well as the Northcote-Trevelyan Civil Service returns in the 19th century, was enthusiastically adopted by Fabian socialists such as Sidney Webb and, later, R H Tawney, who saw selection by ability as the apotheosis of socialist meritocracy — opening up opportunities to all on the basis of ability rather than parental wealth and status.

have been a disaster. I grew up in a house where we didn't know where the next meal was coming from, but thanks to my grammar school was able to go to university and make something of myself. Thank you for saying out loud what a lot of Labour Party members think but are too afraid to say in public.

Gillian Shephard had announced on Monday that schools would be able to specialise further by admitting 15 per cent of pupils who excelled at music, few outside the educational establishment that has failed our children for the past three decades would have batted an eyelid. The Labour Party now, for instance, accepts that grant-maintained schools, with their inherent specialist bias, are here to stay. All the evidence (such as the 60,000 pupil AFS-ESB survey) shows that pupils at schools with a clear-cut focus outperform those which lack clear goals, an ambitious curriculum, and a strong educational leadership.

Indeed, even middle-class, Guardian-reading liberals, especially in the inner cities, deny their own actions in worshipping at the shrine of their comprehensive ideals whilst sending young Charlottes or Thomases to a private or out-of-borough grant-maintained school; they explain that, much as it pains them, their local school is not good enough. It's not the fault of the comprehensive system, they say; just that their own partic-

ular local school isn't up to the job. If only this vicious government spent more money on the school. And, of course, many of the most vocal defenders of the comprehensive system pay for extra tuition for their children, whilst angrily dismissing the views of those who argue that the structure of our educational system is at fault. As John Gray has put it: "Does egalitarian opposition to selection in state schools [not] guarantee, in effect, the future of a privileged private sector through which all of Britain's worst class inequalities are reproduced?" Can we not learn from the Asian tiger that economic success in our time demands an education system that rewards ability, rather than one in which egalitarianism and privilege co-exist and reinforce one another?

So there is more than a full measure of hypocrisy and euphemism at work here. Roy Hattersley is at least honest in his opposition to selection. He is right when he argues that specialisation — the politically correct word for selection — is inconsistent with the comprehensive ideal. For Labour to be opposed to Gillian Shephard's announcement of a tiny measure of academic selection on the basis that it is a step away from a comprehensive system, and yet to accept the existence of grant-maintained schools, is an intellectual sleight of hand that fools no one. Hattersley is wrong, however, when he concludes that the party must therefore revert to the old nostrums that have got us in this mess. Rather, Tony Blair should carry on the process of

where "selection" is a word with as many negative connotations as racism — prevents what happens in the real world from affecting political debate. I made these arguments last year in a pamphlet for the Social Market Foundation and was howled down by many on the left who equate a belief in comprehensive schools with a left philosophy (exactly the same confusion of means and ends that bedevilled Labour's old Clause 4). I wish I could show them the many other letters I received from Labour Party members, both parents and teachers. As one of them put it: "I am relieved to hear someone from the left arguing that comprehensive schools

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Tomorrow: Accountants take fraud seriously

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Finance Guardian

The battle for Forte
Hotels sale 'only choice'

Granada chief Gerry Robinson reverses tactics on Savoy and Meridien
PHOTOGRAPH: GARRY WEAVER

Granada denies £3.8bn tag involves asset strip

Granada yesterday raised the stakes in its battle for control of Forte by increasing its bid to £3.8 billion, pledging to sell the target group's Meridien and up-market hotels and promising shareholders a special dividend of 47p a share.



The identity of the potential buyers is not known. According to sources, which Forte outbid to snap up Air France's 57 per cent Meridien stake in 1994, refused to confirm an approach.

Octogenarians on Council nod through £50m deal... after nodding off

IT WAS not explaining the bid strategy to the Forte Council that was the hardest task for Gerry Robinson, but keeping its octogenarian members awake.

Notebook

Takeover bid tilts Robinson's way



Edited by Mark Milner

DESPITE the inevitable knock-about exchanges between the warring factions, there is a certain elegance about Granada's response to Forte's vigorous efforts to retain its independence.

growth, according to the traditional pessimists of the DIW institute, unlikely to rise above 1 per cent this year. Profligate pay rises in the public sector last year, recent tax cuts for the low paid, excessive burdens on social security spending — all militate in favour of enhanced budgetary problems this year.

Ecu support

OTHERS besides Mr Waigel have the timing of EMU on their minds. Yesterday the Bank of England announced a tender for Treasury notes denominated in ecus.

Fund manager with decisive stake covers her bet

Profile

SHE looks for all the world like the business librarian she started out as — a well groomed, bespectacled brunette, writes Lisa Buckingham.

The 47-year-old Ms Galley, who friends say looks significantly younger despite relentlessly long working hours, sits astride share stakes of about 14 per cent in both the bidder and the target.

Those who know Ms Galley say that despite MAM's individualistic tactics in case group is one of the few which dares to take large stakes in companies it regards as undervalued and steers clear of those it dislikes — she does not let personal preference override a calculation of investment performance.

Quite clearly Ms Galley intimidates a number of her peers in the City and, as a woman, probably suffers in the eyes of a largely male community for a lack of "clubability".

She hit the headlines during Granada's hostile £750 million takeover bid for the London TV station, LWT, two years ago when, despite owning a 20 per cent stake, she decided to hand control of the business to Granada's Gerry Robinson.

shakers in the community of insurance and pension fund investors whose judgments decide the fate of companies, whether through boardroom shake-ups or takeover bids.

Cheap labourers pawns in the takeover game

Workface/ 'Flexibility' means untrained stop-gap staff, says Richard Thomas

MEISHA worries constantly about towels and shampoo. As a chambermaid in Forte's Bloomsbury hotel, paid on a piecework rate of £1.50 per room, she has to "if I make one mistake and forget something, I get no money for that room", she said yesterday.

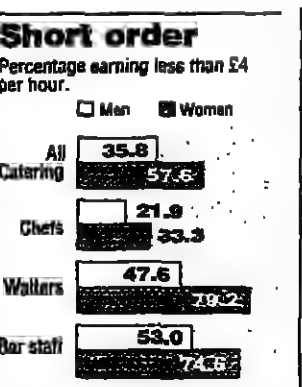
These are the pawns in the game being played by Forte and Granada — the people from whom "more value" is to be squeezed to boost profits. Those at the bottom of the pile already work long hours for lowly wages, and mostly as a stop-gap — a third of hotel workers move every year, twice the level of turnover recorded in Germany.

British Industry, which backed the campaign to abolish the Wages Councils — which guaranteed minimum rates in industries like hotels and catering — and most vehemently oppose Labour's plans for a minimum wage and adoption of the social charter.

But mergers and takeovers may undermine the very market forces the industry claims will punish bad employers.

control pay levels." The growth of the mega-hotel chain has also undermined trade union efforts. Union-negotiated agreements in ten hotels, despite being done in the name of the best investment returns in the sector, she decided to hand control of the business to Granada's Gerry Robinson.

As a result, unions have changed their strategy. "Now we try and get workers to think and act collectively, rather than making membership the be-all and end-all," said Mr Turnbull.



Boeing wins \$4bn Malaysian order in setback for Airbus but triumph for Rolls-Royce

Simon Davies Industrial Editor
BOEING continued its sweep of multi-billion dollar airliner orders yesterday when it clinched a \$4 billion order for 25 jets from Malaysian Airline Systems in what is a significant setback for the

European Airbus Industrie consortium. The deal marks another important victory for Rolls-Royce, which has been chosen to power 15 of the Boeing 777 airliners on order from MAS.

It has already supplied the airlines with A330 jets. But MAS officials made it clear yesterday that they could not afford to have too broad a range of aircraft in the fleet.

But John Cheffins, managing director of the group's commercial aero-engine division, said the engine's success had been even more marked in the Far East. He said the Trent had taken about 60 per cent of Boeing 777 orders in the entire Asia Pacific and been selected by every 777 operator in South East Asia.

tem. It would be very expensive. The deal marks a good start to 1996 for Boeing, which scrambled back to be market leader last year having fallen into second place behind Airbus in 1994.

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Barings' fraud inspectors look to Singapore again

Pauline Springett

THE Serious Fraud Office is considering whether to send inspectors back to Singapore to reactivate its inquiries into the collapse of Barings bank.

quies need to be made." The SFO's investigation into the Barings collapse was at its height during last summer amid speculation that it might seek to have Mr Leeson returned to the UK for trial. But the SFO has always insisted that it would only pursue its inquiry if it had reason to believe that criminal activity in Britain had contributed to the bank's crash last February.

Table with columns for country and bank sell rates: Australia 2.0175, Austria 15.70, Belgium 44.40, Canada 2.06, Cyprus 0.6950, Denmark 8.40, Finland 6.70, France 7.40, Germany 2.1600, Greece 383.00, Hong Kong 11.75, India 52.48, Ireland 0.94, Israel 4.86, Italy 2.295, Malta 0.5400, Netherlands 2.4250, New Zealand 2.30, Norway 8.51, Portugal 225.00, Saudi Arabia N/A, Singapore 2.15, South Africa 5.7, Spain 181.00, Sweden 10.07, Switzerland 1.74, Turkey 83.975, USA 1.5150

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Tennis

Upset wins by Henman, Rusedski

GREG RUSEDSKI and Tim Henman are warming up nicely for the Australian Open, which opens in Melbourne on Monday. Both scored notable wins at the Peters International tournament in Sydney yesterday.

Rusedski, the 21-year-old British No. 1, took two tiebreaks to beat the second-seeded Richard Krajicek 7-6, 7-6. Henman, who had to come through the qualifying rounds, had an unexpected easy 6-4, 6-2 win over Australia's Mark Philippoussis.



Rusedski... in form

Henman out-thought the Australian teenager, whose game is built almost entirely on power. His game can sometimes become a little one-dimensional, said Henman. "I think that was the first time I played as well as I can play."



Genie of the lamp... Andre Agassi, newly shaven-headed, holds court in Melbourne, where he is polishing up his magic touch for the Australian Open.

Ice Hockey

Tension rises as brawl teams meet

Vic Batchelder on tonight's rematch of the season between Durham and Sheffield

BRITISH ice hockey will collectively hold its breath tonight when the Sheffield Steelers visit the Durham Wasps at Sunderland's Crowtree Ice Rink.

When the sides last met, at the same venue on December 16, the Premier Division match was halted for 30 minutes because of a mass brawl while the crowd calmed and two of their number treated for shock.

Technical director and chief trouble shooter, is confident that the game's image will not be blacked further. He will watch over tonight's proceedings having thoroughly briefed all concerned, including the match referee Simon Kirkham.

Lambert, meanwhile, waits to see if he will ever play again. Having spent two days in Sunderland Eye Infirmary, where 17 stitches were inserted in cuts around an eye, the retina and tear duct of which were also damaged, he continues to convalesce.

The original clash has brought to a head the question of whether the game has become too dangerous. There have been several other instances this season of players receiving facial injuries from sticks and one player close to the Chim-Lambert incident claimed that "British ice hockey is the most violent in the world."

Chim... police inquiry

Racing

Russell's Rocket to continue run

FAVOUR Major Bell over hurdles - he was beaten only a length by What A Question at Aintree last April - and he looks the sort to do well over fences.

Jodami, unimpressive when winning narrowly at Kelso in November, will miss his intended engagement at Wetherby tomorrow after suffering a minor setback.

The Guardian racing team landed its fifth consecutive winning nap yesterday with Robellion (11-4) at Lingfield.

Today's scheduled meeting at Plumpton was called off yesterday morning. The course is waterlogged.

Kelso card with guide to the form

Table with racing results and form guides for Kelso, including race numbers, names, and odds.

Wolverhampton (A.W.)

Table with racing results and form guides for Wolverhampton, including race numbers, names, and odds.

Kinsman Cheltenham bound

ARCTIC KINSMAN will be prepared for the Arkle Challenge Chase at the Cheltenham Festival after putting up a sparkling display on his fencing debut at Leicester yesterday.

Cheltenham is definitely the aim and we might take him there at the end of the month to give him a little bit of practice over the course, said Nigel Twiston-Davies, the gelding's trainer.

Results

Table with racing results for various tracks, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Blinkered for the first time - WOLVERHAMPTON: 1.00

Box Hill, 2.00 Sir Tasker, 3.20 Hand of Straw. KELSO: 1.15 Lander Square.

PUPIL beat teacher in Lingfield's opener yesterday when new trainer Chris Murray trumped his old boss, Patrick Haslam.

Murray, who took out a licence last month, sent out his first winner when Happy Partner, ridden by Michael Tebbutt, beat Haslam's Copper Bright by a length and a quarter.

He had previously run Middlebury, Haslam's stablemate yard in Newmarket, which closed last September.

Haslam, who went on to land a double with Ultra Bardy and China Castle, said: "I couldn't be more happy for Chris. He did a first-class job for me. When I closed down the Newmarket operation I left a couple with him, one of which was Happy Partner."

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Soccer

David Lacey on suspicions of FA division as a senior member tries to clarify the procedure for extending the England coach's contract

New doubts on Venables' future

TERRY VENABLES flew back from a holiday in the sun yesterday to find a fresh cloud of doubt being raised about the wisdom of extending his contract as England's coach before he has proved himself in this summer's European Championship.

Venables will be back at his desk at the Football Association this morning and later this week will resume negotiations with Graham Kelly, the FA's chief executive, over a new contract which would leave him in charge for the 1998 World Cup.

Both Kelly and Sir Bert Millichip, the FA chairman, want Venables to stay on. Kelly,

moreover, is keen to get the issue settled before the summer. It would not make sense, he argues, to be discussing terms in August when England will almost certainly be playing their first World Cup qualifier in September.

Yesterday, however, Ian Stott, the Oldham chairman and a leading member of the FA's international committee, went on BBC Radio 4's Today programme to question both the timing of the Venables exercise and who should be involved in the decision-making process.

It is clear that the committee are concerned about being upstaged by a Kelly-Millichip cabal which would present

the renewal of Venables' contract as a virtual fait accompli. The 81-year-old Millichip's impending retirement as chairman is another factor.

"I don't think it is a question of whether the international committee want to have a say," Stott argued. "It's just a question of establishing the procedure, who is involved and who ultimately finds out about it. The question of timing might come into it and who is responsible. Those are two points that need clarification."

Stott insisted that he and his fellow committee members are not gunning for Venables. "There is no question of the international commit-

tee not thinking Terry Venables is the right man for the job," he said. "I think we'll just let him get right on with it until such a time that something comes along which we can't ignore."

There, of course, is the rub. The backing for Venables' coaching credentials may be unanimous and would weaken only if England had as bad a European Championship as they did under Graham Taylor in Sweden four years ago. But there is concern about the amount of litigation outstanding in which Venables is still involved.

His case against Tottenham for wrongful dismissal is in its third year, two libel

actions have yet to be resolved, as has Alan Sugar's own libel suit against Venables. In addition Venables faces the possibility of being disqualified as a company director following an 18-month inquiry into his business dealings by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Even Kelly has admitted that "there are a lot of imponderables flying around". Part of his discussions with Venables will concern the amount of the England coach's time that is likely to be taken up with legal matters once the European Championship is over.

From the footballing point of view the picture will be-

come clearer a week today, when Kelly and Venables are in Warsaw to sort out the dates of fixtures with England's opponents in the World Cup qualifiers — Italy, Poland, Georgia and Moldova.

To a certain extent the present uncertainties were inevitable once the FA had decided to give Venables a two-year contract instead of following precedent and putting him in charge for both the 1996 European Championship and the 1998 World Cup.

The odds are heavily in favour of Venables keeping the job after Euro '96, always assuming he still wants it. For one thing there is no obvious alternative. Gerry Fran-



Stott...procedural worries

Orient player fails drug test

Russell Thomas

THE first cocaine scandal to hit English football threatens to put Roger Stanislaus of Leyton Orient out of the game for a long time as the FA braces itself to deal with potentially the most serious drug case to date.

The full-back was yesterday charged by the FA with misconduct and is the first to stand accused of using a performance-enhancing drug and to fail a test after a match. The FA regards the case as "extremely serious".

Unlike Arsenal's Paul Merson, who admitted to experimenting with cocaine, but only socially, Stanislaus is believed to have had traces in his system immediately after a game when the 37-year-old player was randomly tested at Barnet on November 25.

Stanislaus, who is also the first player to fail any drug test this season, can expect an extensive ban if found guilty and will be allowed to return only when he has satisfactorily completed an extensive rehabilitation programme.

The seriousness of the case was made clear by the FA spokesman Steve Double. "Any traces of a performance-enhancing drug, particularly after a match, must be treated as a matter of the utmost seriousness," said Double.

Cocaine is a stimulant and in this case, the test level of the sample is thought to be performance-enhancing and there is clearly a case to answer on those grounds."

Stanislaus has 14 days to request a personal hearing and the FA said it will deal speedily with the case.

Stanislaus will be allowed to play until the case is concluded but Orient may decide to "rest" him. The future of the Hammersmith-born player, bought from Bury for £40,000 last summer, is to be discussed by Orient's chairman Barry Hearn and their manager Pat Holland.

Merson spent four months out of the game after presenting himself to the FA after newspaper revelations of recreational cocaine use. But the Arsenal player's problems were more to do with gambling and alcohol and the extent of the FA's response was rehabilitation and education.

The Stanislaus case does not, in the football authorities' eyes, point to a downturn in the fight against drugs. Brendan Batson of the players' union, the PFA, said: "The level of positive tests, while a concern, does not give rise to the feeling that the game is rife with players using drugs."

The FA conducted 272 random tests last season and found 12 positive samples, all at clubs' training grounds. Tests have been running at a similar level this season.

The 12 failed tests included eight cannabis samples, Chris Armstrong, then of Crystal Palace, being the most celebrated case, two for substances found in cold cures and two for amphetamines.

Norwich City demonstrators will be up in arms again if Birmingham win at Carrow Road tonight but John Duncan finds a cool customer in the hot seat

Chase the chairman who refuses to fade away

ROBERT CHASE is not wearing a tin helmet. There is no blinkered mentality at Carrow Road. As far as the Norwich chairman is concerned, tonight's Coca-Cola Cup quarter-final against Birmingham is an important match but nothing more.

His critics disagree. They have staged sit-ins, red-card protests, stay-aways and demonstrations that have come close to real ugliness. For them this is make-or-break time for a club that has sold its best players and lost its soul. Defeat tonight and their shouts of "Chase out" will raise the roof.

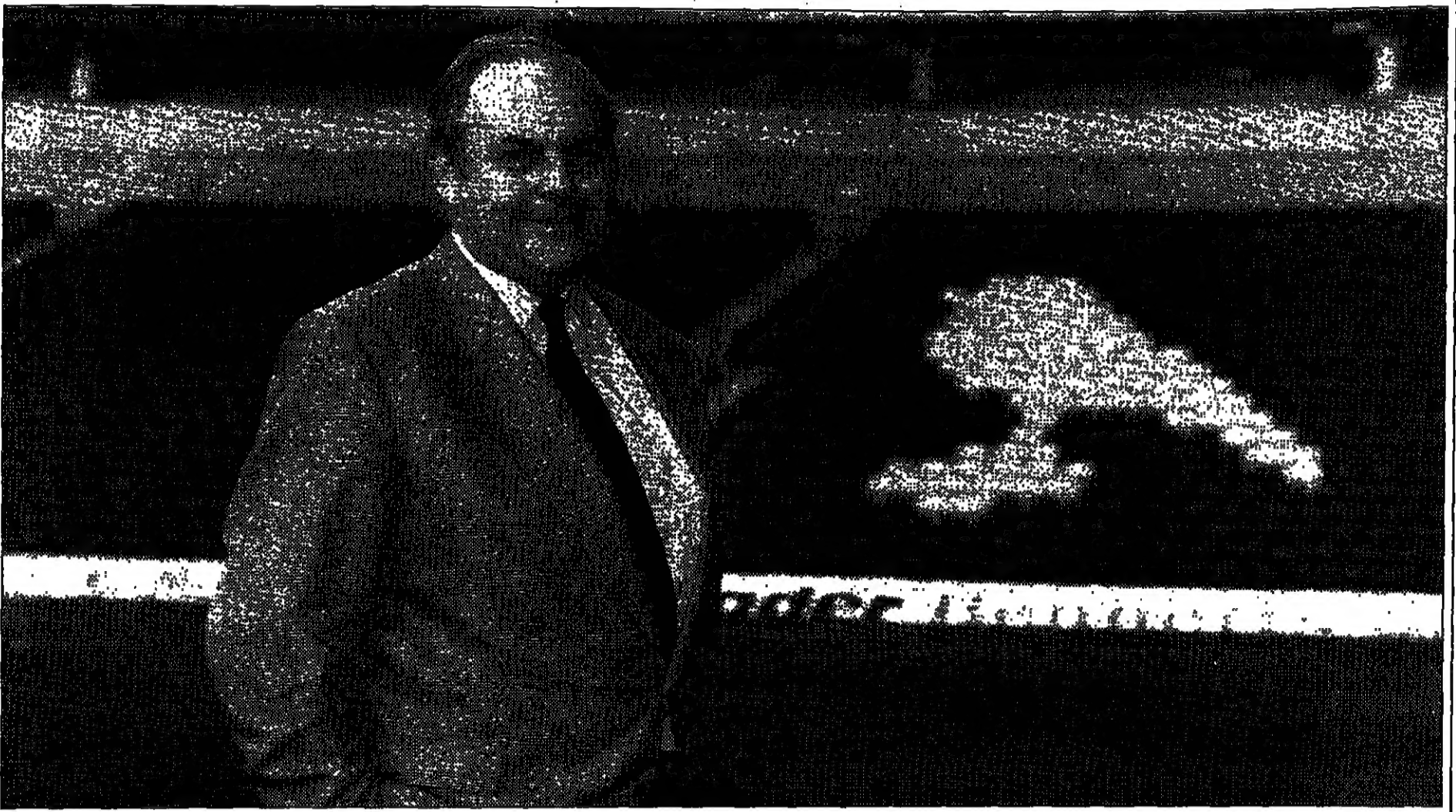
Chase himself will be unmoved. "What makes football such a marvellous game is that people feel so passionate about it," he said. "What we are going through here other chairmen have had to face. It's part of the job. We've just got to grit our teeth and tough it out."

The case for the prosecution is simple. Chase, say his critics, has improved the ground by selling players — Chris Sutton, Ruel Fox, Tim Sherwood, Mark Robins of recent vintage.

He has allowed good managers to go because they would not bend to his will, he has built up the capital assets of the club — land, car parks, new stands — in order to make a killing when a proposed flotation occurs. And, although he has not got the cash to let Norwich compete with the best, he refuses to step aside and let someone else have a go.

Chase shouts a loud Not Guilty on all counts. The decrepit ground had to be improved because of the Taylor report, he says. The money from players is reinvested as far as possible but the books have to be balanced. He never interferes in anything other than keeping a firm and sensible financial control. He has built up the assets in the long-term interests of the club and, if someone with money can be found who can do better, he will sell up.

But still the prosecution will not rest. "Norwich City is a ship that has run aground," said Roy Blower of the Nor-



Seats at all prices... Robert Chase surveys his Norwich domain. 'Ask my critics what they would do in my place,' he says, 'and they are a lot less forthcoming' PHOTOGRAPH: SIMON LUNN

wich City Independent Supporters' Association. "His attitude to Mike Walker and Martin O'Neill was symptomatic of his lack of ambition."

Walker walked after not receiving a long-term contract. O'Neill is believed to have been upset at the lack of money for players.

"They have a budget to operate with," said Chase. "We have no means to support overspending. Mike Walker when he signed it but after 18 months he wanted to change it. I didn't. He was an exceptional manager but one of the

ways business get themselves in a muddle is by giving people wage increases every three months."

None of this comforts supporters who have followed their side from UEFA Cup to mid-table Eerste Divisie League in two years — in fact from fifth in the Premiership last January to 19th in the First Division now.

"In football the hardest job is getting a good team," said Blower, "and a couple of years ago we had one. Chase destroyed it and there are a lot of supporters who will never forgive him for that."

Chase took over as Norwich chairman in 1986 at an emergency meeting called when the entire board resigned. It was a mess. He had been involved at the club since 1983 when, for an investment of £26,000, he purchased around 20,000 shares in the club.

"They are now worth £20 to £30 each, according to Chase — up to £130 say others — and he now owns 40,000 of them."

"If you take a view over 50 years," said Chase, "Norwich made slow progress until Sir Arthur South became chairman and John Bond became manager. They took the club

into the top division but the consequences of that were that the club overextended itself financially."

"That's when I came in. In the 10 years since then we've had a festival of football in Norfolk, we've finished third and fourth in the space of a decade and we've got to two FA Cup semi-finals. And we played our first competitive European football. We've had one bad year in 10, which is a pretty good ratio."

"What he means is that his luck has finally run out," said Blower.

Until now Chase and his

vice-chairman Jimmy Jones have always had a majority of shares that secured important votes, however loud the chants. Now even Jones, a long-standing ally, is having doubts.

"He's done a superb job since he took over," said Jones. "But I think that he's taken it as far as he can and it's probably time for him to let somebody else have a go."

But who? Consortia have been mooted but have never materialised.

"You have a very large number of people who are very vocal against me," said

Chase, "but when you ask them who they would put in my place and what they would do, they are a lot less forthcoming."

"Anyway, why does anyone think that Norwich has the God-given right to be in the Premier League? We have a population of only 120,000 and there's not even a dual carriageway to get here."

"But four good games in the Coca-Cola Cup and we are back in Europe again. That's how thin the line between success and failure is." And just how thick a chairman's skin has to be.

Coca-Cola Cup quarter-finals

Troubled Arsenal need Wright stuff and more

ARSENAL'S old guard will be protecting their Highbury futures as they enter the most significant eight days of their season with Newcastle's visit in the Coca-Cola Cup quarter-final tonight, writes Russell Thomas.

With a £12 million overhaul increasingly threatened by Bruce Rioch, last chances are running out for a team who have won only one of the last eight games.

Arsenal's players must seize their opportunity tonight or otherwise de-

pend on the Premiership visit to Middlesbrough and a difficult FA Cup replay with reviving Sheffield United next Wednesday.

Not for the first time only Ian Wright's ruthlessness — four goals in his last five games — is propping up Arsenal's sagging season. Tonight he will demand assistance from the returning David Platt and Dennis Bergkamp, though the Dutchman, like Steve Bould, first faces a fitness test.

The importance of that

trio could hardly be over-emphasised by Rioch. "We lost continuity in the team when Bould, Adams, Platt, Bergkamp, Wright and Dennis were all out over the last three or four weeks. As a manager there's not a lot you can do about it."

Keegan, taking Newcastle to their first quarter-final in the competition for 20 years, has urged his team to raise the tempo, despite the last-ditch efforts which spared FA Cup elimination at Chelsea on Sunday.

Keegan, who may have to

replace Lee (Achilles tendon) in midfield, said: "We'll need to step up when we play Arsenal. We really must step up if we are to reach the last four."

Mark McGhee still awaits his first win as Wolves manager after four attempts but is decidedly upbeat about the all-Midlands meeting at Aston Villa.

McGhee said: "We know we'll be very difficult to beat, dogged and determined. That means they'll have to produce something special." But he must

reshape his defence and midfield with Embien, Osborn and Williams missing.

Barry Fry went back to Southend to protect Birmingham's chances at Norwich, where Sansome is likely to keep goal for the visitors at the start of a month's loan.

Reading similarly sought goalkeeper cover, taking Nixon from Tranmere before the trip to Leeds, where Brolin, left out of the FA Cup on Sunday, bears the striking burden with Yeboah and Deane missing.

Hottiger to join Everton

Ian Ross and Don Best

EVERTON have moved swiftly to capitalise on the abolition of the restriction on foreign players by agreeing to buy Newcastle United's Swiss international defender Marc Hottiger.

The right-back, for whom Everton require a new work permit, has not discussed personal terms but the clubs have agreed a £700,000 fee. The deal is likely to speed Matt Jackson's departure from Everton.

"I inquired about Marc a couple of months ago but was told he was not for sale," said

Everton's manager Joe Royle. "I believe he will be very successful at Goodison and I know Kevin Keegan does not want him to leave."

Oldham, Royle's former club, have been ordered by the Football League to pay Stoke City £180,000 for the Icelandic midfielder Tody Orlygsson. They wanted the out-of-contract player free following the Jean-Marc Bosman ruling.

Stoke, however, wanted £750,000 for Orlygsson, who moved to Oldham three weeks ago, and their chief executive Jez Moxey said: "Tody is 29 and in the prime of his career. The verdict is incredible."

West Ham have accepted a £1.2 million offer from Sheffield United for Don Hutchison. The former Liverpool midfielder, who joined the London side for £1.5 million in 1994, will make a decision on the proposed move today.

Liverpool are to offer new, presumably short-term, contracts to the veterans Ian Rush and Mark Wright but at the other end of the scale Chris Lawler, the former Anfield and England defender, has been sacked as manager by Queens Park Rangers.

The Austrian striker Ralph Hasenhuttl has joined Bolton Wanderers on trial from Casino Salzburg.

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| Aston Villa | 11 | Leeds United | 03 | Sheffield Wed. | 24 |
| Birm. City | 34 | Leicester City | 38 | Southampton | 20 |
| Blackburn | 21 | Liverpool | 04 | Stoke City | 30 |
| Bolton | 36 | Man. City | 02 | Sunderland | 07 |
| Brentford | 24 | Man. United | 01 | Tottenham Hot. | 27 |
| Burnley | 01 | Middlesbrough | 23 | West Ham | 12 |
| Chelsea | 08 | Millwall | 29 | Wimbledon | 26 |
| Coventry City | 17 | Newcastle Utd | 16 | Wolves | 37 |
| Derby County | 28 | Norwich City | 18 | Celtic | 09 |
| Everton | 05 | Notm. Forest | 13 | Rangers | 10 |
| Hudd. Town | 32 | QPR | 25 | | |

Sport
The Guardian

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Rugby League Castleford end sorry season on a Gay note

Paul Fitzpatrick

THIS has been a dispiriting season for Castleford but the signing of Richard Gay from Hull should help assuage some of the disenchantment of their followers.

Subject to a medical, the 26-year-old full-back will sign a three-year contract today. The fee is reported to be £100,000 and that should enable Hull to pursue their interest in Dewsbury's Australian scrum-half Glen Tomlinson.

Gay has not played since before Christmas and he joins

Castleford too late to play for them in the Challenge Cup, which starts at the end of the month.

But John Joyner, the Castleford coach, has signed the talented, attack-conscious player very much with the Super League in mind. He is trying to rebuild a team that looked ready to compete with the best two years ago when they beat Wigan to win the Regal Trophy.

Since then a number of talented players — Ellis, Ford, Hay, Morrison, Blackmore and Kemp among them — have departed and have not been fully replaced. Castleford signed Frano Botica ear-

lier this season but the goal-kicker has not recovered from a broken leg.

Gay played twice for England last year, against France and Wales, but failed to secure a place in Phil Larder's final World Cup squad. He was put on stand-by, however, as the doubts about Gary Connolly's fitness mounted.

Bradford were also interested in Gay. Their coach Brian Smith was in charge at Hull when Gay arrived at The Boulevard from local rugby league and always held him in high regard. When Smith returned to Australia to coach Sydney St George, Gay

joined him for a short while. The race for the Centenary Championship could end tonight if Leeds fail to beat Oldham at Headingley. The Yorkshire club should win and keep alive their improbable hopes of denying Wigan the title but they will meet an Oldham side in their best form of the season.

Neil Harmon, Francis Cummins and Mick Forshaw are injured and Leeds make a number of changes from Saturday's losing Regal Trophy semi-final side.

Alan Tait plays for the first time in seven games. He comes in at full-back in place of Graham Holroyd, who

switches to stand-off. George Mann moves from stand-off back to a pack which also includes Nick Fozzard, Harvey Howard and Mick Shaw.

Dean Busby, the loose forward signed from Hull last summer, will be fit for St Helens' Regal Trophy final with Wigan after missing last Sunday's league match against Warrington because of a groin strain.

St Helens still have doubts over a number of players, however, including the centre Paul Newlove, the winger Anthony Sullivan and the second-row forward Chris Joynt.



Gay...£100,000 fee

سكيات الداهل

